THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN Contentment.

Wherein is shewed:

1. *What* Contentment *is.*
2. *The Holy Art or Mystery of it.*
3. *Several* Lessons *that Christ teacheth to work the Heart to* Contentment.
4. *The Excellencies of it.*
5. *The Evil of Murmuring.*
6. *The Aggravation of the* Sin *of Murmuring.*

By JEREMIAH BURROUGHS.

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To the Reader.

THis worthy Man, *especially in his latter times, was surrounded (through Gods blessing on him) with a very great confluence of what might give* Contentment *to a vast spirit of his Rank and Calling. He was enriched with a large measure of Abilities and Opportunities in serving his Lord (to glorifie whom, and do much good to other, is the divine part of man gracious (whiche he was,) the highest and most solid satisfaction, and in many respects exceeds what personal Communion with God, singly considered, brings in:) Besides, he lived and died in a fulness of honor and esteem with the best of men, of Saints; Yea, the worst of Enemies: Likewise of Estate, and outward Comforts within his Sphere and rank, all which did and might afford* Contentment *to what was outward in him. In the midst of these, his study was to find out a more sublime way, and hidden Art of Self-sufficiency, than was in the power of all things to contribute or teach; Such a skill as did not only poise and compose his Spirit in the present enjoyment of all, but might fortifie and furnish him with provision for the future against the loss of all, in the times were-in* man knoweth not what evil will be in the Earth. *This Mark his first Lines shew he shot at, This Art some Philosophers of old pretended themselves Masters of, and to instruct others in through the assistance of Natural and Moral Elements, elevated to the utmost height their Principles could carry them; but in vain: The Chymistry in this kind being able to produce no more but a sullen obstinacy and obdurateness of mind. The* Natural Spirit of a Man, *feeling it self greater than all Creatures, gathering up, and consolidating its self into its self, is able (as* Solomon *says)* to sustain its own, and all others infirmities. *But that* Autarchy *this Author here presents, is a Mystery, which* none of these Princes of the World know, or the Wisdom of Man teacheth, but the Holy Ghost teacheth; *and which few, but those that are* per-

fect, *do attain*; *Teaching the Soul to deny it ſelf into weakneſs, emptineſs in and to its ſelf, and all things elſe; and thus diſſolved to unite it ſelf to Him who only hath bleſſedneſs and Al-ſufficiency with whom aſſociated, and made intimate it melts it ſelf into all his Intereſts, making them its own, and thereby comes to have alll that Al-ſufficiency of the high God to be its Self-ſufficiency: and then, What ſtate can that Soul be in, wherein it may not be content? ſeeing it hath God to be the chiefeſt comfort in its beſt times and only comfort in its worſt. This, though it be the inheritance of every Saint in the right and title to it, yet the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of it, depends upon an improvement of this Inheritance, and that upon a skill which is to be learned* by experience and much exerciſe (as S. *Paul* ſpeaks) I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am therewith to be Content. *This piece of learning this ſerious ſpirited Man inured himſelf unto, and digging for it as* Rubies, *(as* Solomans *Scholar for* Wiſdom*) hath found it, and hath hewn forth this* JEWEL *(a Title given neither by Himſelf, nor by Us the Publiſhers, to the Subject it ſelf, yet the Materials themſelves deſerving it) out of the Rock, and hath artificially cut it, that the innate Rays of this ſo glorious a Grace might ſhine forth to others. And here it comes to be preſented, though ſet forth as the richeſt* Jewels *are, often, for a while, in ruder Metals, until bargained, but then are placed in Tablets worthy of them. The only ſeat this is ordained for, is, the precious Tablets of Mens Hearts, in and from which alone the native luſtre of it will be made conſpicuous:* Reader, *buy it, ſet and wear it there, and it ſhall (as* Solomon *ſpeaks,* Prov. 3. 22, *&c.* Be life unto thy Soul, and Grace unto thy Neck: Thou ſhalt not be afraid when thou lieſt down; Yea, thy ſleep ſhall be ſweet unto thee: for the Lord will be thy confidence.

Thomas Goodwin.
Sydrach Simpſon.
William Greenhil
Philip Nye.
William Bridge.
John Yates.
William Adderly.

The

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THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

SERMON I. *At* Stepney, *July* 27. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

HERE is a very *Seasonable Cordial* to revive thee drooping Spirits of the Saints in sad and sinking times; For the *hour of Temptation* is already come upon all the world to try the Inhabitants of the Earth.

Our *Great Apostle* experimentally holds forth in this Gospel-text, the very life and soul of all Practical Divinity; wherein we may plainly read his own proficiency in Christs School, and what Lesson every Christian that would evidence the Power & growth of Godliness in his own Soul, must necessarily learn from him.

Theſe words are brought in by St. *Paul*, as a plain argument to perſwade the *Philippians*, that he did not ſeek after great things in the world, and that he ſought not theirs, but them: He did not paſs for a great eſtate; he had better things to take up his heart withal. *I do not ſpeak* (ſaith he) *in reſpect of want, (For) whether I have or have not, my heart is fully ſatisfied, I have enough: I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

I have learned.] Contentment in every condition is a great Art, a ſpecial Myſtery: It is to be learned and ſo to be learned as a Myſtery: And therefore *ver* 12. he affirms, *I know how to be abaſed and I know how to abound, every where and in all things I am inſtructed:* The word Μεμύημαι which is tranſlated [*Inſtructed*] is derived from that word μυστήριον, which ſignifies *Myſtery*; and it is as much as if he had ſaid, I have learned the myſtery of this buſineſs. Contentment is to be learned as a great myſtery; and thoſe that are throughly trained up in that art, have learned a deep *Myſtery*: The which is as *Sampſons* riddle to a natural man. [*I have learned it.*] It is not now to learn, neither had I it at firſt, I have attained it though with much ado, and now by the grace of God I am become Maſter of this Art.

In whatſoever ſtate I am] The word [*State*] is not in the Original, but ἐν οἷς εἰμι, *In what I am*, that is, in whatſoever concerns me or befals me, whether I have little or nothing at all

Therewith to be content, αὐτάρκη εἶναι] The word which we render *Content* here, hath in the Original much elegancy and fulneſs of ſignification in it. In ſtrictneſs of phraſe it is only attributed unto God, who hath ſtiled himſelf God *All-ſufficient*, as reſting wholly ſatisfied in and with himſelf alone; but he is pleaſed freely to communicate of his fulneſs to the creature, ſo that from God in Chriſt the Saints *receive grace for grace*, *Joh.* 1. 16. In ſo much that there is in them an anſwerableneſs of the ſame grace in their proportion that is in Chriſt. And in this ſenſe St. *Paul* ſaith, *I have a ſelf ſufficiency*, as the word notes.

But hath St. *Paul* a ſelf-ſufficiency you will ſay? How are we ſufficient of our ſelves? Our Apoſtle affirms in another caſe, *That we are not ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of*

one.

our selves, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. His meaning therefore must be, I find a sufficiency of satisfacttion in my own heart, through the grace of Christ that is in me; thongh I have not outward comforts and worldly accomodations to supply my necessities, yet I enjoy portion enough betwixt Christ and my own soul abundantly to satisfie me in every condition And this interpretation is sutable to that place, *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good man is satisfied from himself*, and agreeable to what he verifies of himself in another place; that *though he had nothing yet he possessed all things*; because he had right to the covenant and promise which virtually contains all, and an interest in Christ the Fountain and Good of all, and having that, no marvel he saith, That in whatsoever state he was in, he was content. Thus you have the genuine interpretation of the Text. I shall not make any division of the words, because I take them only to prosecute that *one duty* most necessary, *viz.* The quieting and comforting the hearts of Gods people under the troubles & changes they meet withal in their heart-shaking times: And the Doctrinal Conclusion is in brief this:

Doct. *That to be well skill'd in the mystery of Christian Contentment, is the duty, glory, and excellency of a Christian.*

This Evangelical Truth is held forth sufficiently in Scripture; yet take one or two paralel places more for the confirmation of it. 1. *Tim.* 6. 6, and 8. you have both the duty expresst, and the glory therefore: *Having food and raiment* (saith *ver.* 8.) *let us therewith be content*, there is the duty; *But Godliness with Contentment is great gain*, ver. 6. there is the glory and excellency of it; as if godliness were not gain except there were contentment withal. The like exhortation you have in *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.* I do not find any Apostle or Writer of Scripture treat so much of the spiritual mystery of Contentment as this our Apostle hath done throughout his Epistles.

For the clear opening and proving of this practical conclusion I shall endeavour to demonstrate these four things.

First, the nature of this Christian Contentment, what it is.

Secondly, the Art and Mystery of it.

Thirdly, What those Lessons are that must be learn'd to work the heart to Contentment.

Fourthly, Wherein the glorious excellencies of this grace do principally consist.

Concerning the first, take this description: *Christian Contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of Spirit, freely submitting to, and taking complacency in Gods wise, and fatherly dispose in every condition.*

I shall break open this description, for it is a box of precious Ointment, very comfortable and useful for troubled hearts, in troubled Times and Conditions.

First, *Contentment* (I say) *is a sweet (inward) heart-thing, it is a work of the Spirit within doors:* It is not only a not seeking help to our selves by outward Violence, or a forbearance of discontented murmuring Expressions, in froward words and carriages against God and others; but it is the inward submission of the heart. Psal. 62. 1. *Truly, my soul waiteth upon God*; and ver. 5. *My soul wait thou only upon God*: So it is in your Books, but the words may be translated as rightly, *My soul be thou silent unto God. Hold thy peace O my Soul*: Not only the tongue must holds its peace, but the Soul must be silent: Many may sit down silently, forbearing discontented expressions, yet are inwardly swollen with discontentment. Now this manifesteth a perplexed distemper, and a great frowardness in their hearts; and God notwithstanding their outward silence, hears the peevish fretting language of their Souls. The Shoe may be smooth and neat without, whilst the Flesh is pinched within: There may be much calmness and stilness outwardly, and yet wonderful confusion, bitterness, disturbance, and vexation within. Some are so weak, that they are not able to contain the disquietness of their own Spirits, but in words and behaviour discover what woful perturbations there are within, their Spirits being like the raging Sea, casting forth nothing but mire and dirt; being not only troublesome to themselves, but all those they live with: Others there are who are able to keep in such distempers of heart, (as *Judas* did when he betrayed Christ with a kiss;) but still they boyl inwardly, and eat like a Canker: As *David* speaks concerning some whose words are smoother

ther than honey and butter, and yet have war in their hearts: And as he saith in another place, whilst *I kept silence my bones waxed old*; so these, whilst there is a serene calm upon their Tongues, have yet blustring storms in their Spirits, and whilst they keep silence, their hearts are troubled, and even worn away with anguish and vexation; they have peace and quiet outwardly, but war from the unruly and turbulent workings of their hearts, that is within. If the attaintment to true Contentment were as easie as keeping quiet outwardly, there need be no great learning of it; it might be had with less skill and strength than an Apostle had; yea then an ordinary Christian hath, or may have. Therefore certainly there is a great deal more in it than can be attained by common gifts, and ordinary power of reason, which often bridles in Nature: It is a heart-business.

Secondly, *It is the (quiet) of the heart*, All is sedate and still there, and to understand this the better; This quiet gracious frame of Spirit, It is not opposed

1. *To a due sense of affliction.* God doth give leave to his people to be sensible of what they they suffer: Christ doth not say do not count that a cross which is a cross, but take up your cross daily. As it is in the body natural, if the body takes Physick and is not able to bear it but presently vomits it up, or if it be not at all sensible, if it stir not the body; either of those ways the Physick doth no good, but argues the body much distempered, and will hardly be cured. So it is with the Spirits of men under afflictions; if either they cannot bear Gods Portions, but cast them up again or are not sensible of them, and their souls are no more stirr'd by them than the body is by a draught of small beer; it is a sad Symptome that their Soul are in a dangerous and almost incurable condition: So that this inward quietness is not in opposition to the sense of affliction: For indeed there were no true contentment, if you were not apprehensive and sensible of your afflictions when God is angry. It is not opposed.

2. *To an orderly making our Moan and complaint to God and to our friends.* Though a Christian ought to be quiet under Gods correcting hand, yet he may without any breach of Christian Con-

contentment complain to God: (as one of the Ancients saith) though not with a tumultuous clamour and skreeking out in a perplexed passion, yet in a quiet, still, submissive way he may unbosom his heart unto God; and likewise communicate his sad condition to his gracious friends, shewing them how God hath dealt with him, and how heavy the affliction is upon him, that they may speak a word in due season to his wearied soul.

It is not opposed,

To all lawful seeking out for help unto another condition, or simply endeavouring to be delivered out of the present affliction by the use of lawful means. No, I may lay in provision for my deliverance and use Gods means waiting on him, because I know not but that it may be his will to alter my condition, and so far as he leads me I may follow his providence, it is but my duty. God is thus far mercifully indulgent to our weakness, and he will not take it ill at our hands if by earnest and importunate prayer we seek unto him for deliverance, till we know his good pleasure therein. And certainly thus seeking for help with such a submission and holy resignation of spirit to be delivered when God will, and as God will, and how God will, so that our wills are melted into the will of God, this is no opposition to the quietness which God requires in a contented spirit.

Quest. But then, what is this quietness of Spirit opposed unto?

Answ. *To murmuring and repining at the hand of God, as the discontented* Israelites *often did; which if we our selves cannot endure either in our Children or servants, much less can God bear it in us.*

2. *To vexing and fretting*; which is a degree beyond murmuring. It is a speech I remember of an Heathen; *A wise man may grieve under, but not be vexed with his afflictions.* There is a vast difference betwixt a kindly grieving and a distempered vexation.

3. *To tumultuousness of spirit*: When the thoughts run distractingly and work in a confused manner, so that the affections are like the unruly multitude in the *Acts*, who knew not for what end they were come together. The Lord expects that you should be silent under his rod, and as he said in. *Act* 19. 36. *You*

ought

ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.

4. *To unsetledness and unfixedness of spirit, whereby the heart is taken off from the present duty, that God requires in our several relations, both toward God, our selves, and others.* We should prize duty at a higher rate than to be taken off by every trivial occasion; a Christian indeed values every service of God so much, That though to some it may be in the eye of the world & to natural reason, a slight empty business, beggerly rudiments, foolishness, yet seeing God calls for it, the authority of the command doth so over-awe his heart, that he is willing to spend himself and to be spent in the discharge of it. It is an expression of *Luthers, Ordinary works that are done in faith, and from faith, are more precious than Heaven and Earth.* And if this be so, and a Christian know it, it is not a little matter that should divert him: But he should answer every avocation, and resist every temptation, as *Nehemiah* did, *Chap.* 6. 3. *Sanballat, Geshem,* and *Tobiah* (when they would have hindred the building of the wall) with this, *I am doing a great work* (saith he) *so that I cannot come down, why should the work of the Lord cease?*

5. *To distracting heart eating cares and fears.* A gracious heart so estimates its union with Christ and the Work of God sets it about, as it will not willingly suffer any thing to come in, to choak it, or dead it. A Christian is desirous that the Word of God should take such full possession as to divide between Soul and Spirit, but he would not suffer the fear and noise of evil Tidings to take such impression in his soul, as to make a division and strugling there, like the Twins in *Rebeckah*'s Womb. A great man will permit common people to stand without his doors, but he will not let them come in and make a noise in his closet or bedchamber, when he purposely retires himself from all wordly imployments. So a well-tempered Spirit, though it may inquire after things abroad without doors in the world, and suffer some ordinary cares and fears to break into the suburbs of the soul, so as to have a light touch upon the thoughts: Yet it will not upon any terms admit of an intrusion into the privy Chamber, which should be wholly reserved for Jesus Christ as his inward Temple.

6. *To sinking discouragements,* When things fall not out according

cording to expectation, when the tide of Second causes runs so low, that we see little left in the outward means to bear up our hopes and hearts: That then the heart begins to reason as he in the *Kings*, *If the Lord should open the window of Heaven, how should this be?* Never considering that God can open the eyes of the blind with clay and spittle, he can work above, beyond, nay contrary to means, he often makes the fairest flowers of mans endeavours to wither, and bring improbable things to pass, that the glory of enterprizes may be given to himself. Nay if his people stand in need of miracles to work their deliverance, miracles fall as easily out of Gods hands, as to give his people daily bread. Gods blessing is many times secret upon his Servants that they know not which way it comes: As, 2 *Kings* 3. 17. *Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet the Valley shall be filled with water.* God would have us depend on him, though we do not see means how the thing should be brought to pass, else we do not shew a quiet spirit; though an affliction be upon thee, let not thy heart sink under it. So far as thy heart sinks and thou art discouraged under thy affliction, so much thou wantest of this Lesson of Contentment.

7. *To sinful shiftings and shirkings out for ease and help.* As we see in *Saul* turning to the Witch of *Endor*, and his offering sacrifice before *Samuel* came: Nay, the good King *Jehoshaphat* joyns himself with *Ahaziah*, 2 *Chron.* 20. *ult.* *And* Asa *goes to* Benhadad *King of* Assiria, *for help not relying upon the Lord*, (2 *Chr.* 16. 7, 8) Though the Lord hath delivered the *Ethiopian* Army into his hands, consisting of a thousand thousand, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. And good *Jacob* joyned in a lye with his Mother to *Isaac*, he was not content to stay Gods time, and use Gods means, but made too much hast and crept out of his way, to procure the blessing which God intended for him. As many do through the corruption of their hearts and weakness of their faith, because they are not able to trust God and follow him fully in all things always; And for this cause the Lord often follows the Saints with many sore temporal Crosses, (as we see in *Jacob*) though they obtain the mercy. It may be thy wretched carnal Heart thinks, I care not how I be deli-

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delivered, ſo I may but get free from it: is it not ſo many times in ſome of your hearts when any croſs of affliction befalls you? Have you not ſuch kind of workings of ſpirit as this ; Oh that I could but be delivered out of this affliction any way, I would not care ; your hearts are far from being quiet. And this ſinful ſhifting is the next thing in oppoſition to this quietneſs, which God requires in a contented ſpirit.

The Eighth and laſt thing that this quietneſs of ſpirit is oppoſite to, is *deſperate riſings of heart againſt God in a way of rebellion*: That is moſt abominable. I hope many of you have learned ſo far to be content, as to keep down your hearts from ſuch diſtempers; and yet the truth is, not only wicked men but ſometimes the very Saints of God find the beginnings of this, when an affliction lies long, and is very ſore and heavy upon them indeed, and ſtrikes them as it were in the maſter vein ; they find ſomewhat of this in their hearts, ariſing againſt God their thoughts begin to bubble, and their affections begin to ſtir in riſing againſt God himſelf; eſpecially ſuch as together with their corruptions have much melancholy, and the Devil working both upon the corruption of their hearts, and the melancholy diſtemper of their bodies; though here may lye much grace at the bottom, yet there may be ſome riſings againſt God himſelf under affliction. Now Chriſtian quietneſs is oppoſite to all theſe things: that is, When afflictions come, be it what affliction it will be, yet you do not murmure, though you be ſenſible, though you make your moan, though you deſire to be delivered, and ſeek it by all good means, yet you do not murmure nor repine, you do not fret nor vex, there is not that tumultuouſneſs of ſpirit in you, there is not unſetledneſs in your ſpirits, there are not diſtracting fears in your hearts, no ſinking diſcouragements, no baſe ſhiftings, no riſing in rebellion any way againſt God: This is the quietneſs of Spirit under an affliction: and that is the ſecond thing when the ſoul is ſo far able to bear an affliction as to keep quiet under it.

Now the third thing I would open in the deſcription is this, *It is an inward quiet, gracious* [*frame*] *of Spirit.* It is a frame of Spirit, and then a gracious frame of Spirit. Contentment it is a ſoul-buſineſs. Firſt, It is inward; Secondly

quiet. Thirdly, it is a quiet *Frame* of Spirit. [*Frame*] by that I mean theſe three things: There are Three thing conſiderable when I ſay, Contentment conſiſts in the quiet frame of the Spirit of a Man.

Firſt, *That it is a grace that ſpreads it ſelf through the whole ſoul*: As thus, It is in the judgment, that is, the judgment of the Soul of a man or woman tends to quiet the heart: In my judgment I am ſatisfied, that is one thing to be ſatisfied in ones underſtanding and judgement, as thus, This is the Hand of God: and this is that that is ſutable to my condition, or beſt for me; although I do not ſee the reaſon of the thing, yet I am ſatisfied in my Judgement about it.

And then, *It is in the thoughts of a man or woman*: As my judgment is ſatisfied, ſo my thoughts are kept in order.

And then it comes to the will, *My will yields and ſubmits to it, my affections are all likewiſe kept in order, ſo that it goes through the whole ſoul.* There is in ſome a partial Contentment, and ſo 'tis not the frame of the Soul, but ſome part of the ſoul hath ſome Contentment; as thus, many a man may be ſatisfied in his judgment about any thing, and yet cannot for his life rule his affections, nor his thoughts, nor the will, though the judgment be ſatisfied: I make no queſtion but many of you may know this by your own experience, if you do but obſerve the workings of your own hearts. Cannot you ſay when ſuch an affliction befalls you, I can bleſs God I am ſatisfied in my judgement about it, I have nothing in the world to ſay in reſpect of my judgment againſt it, I ſee the hand of God, and I ſhould be content, yea I am ſatisfied in my judgment, that my condition is a good condition in which I am; but I cannot for my life rule my thoughts, my will, and my affections, methinks I feel my heart heavy, and ſad, and troubled more than it ſhould be, and yet my judgment is ſatisfied. This ſeem'd to be the caſe of *David*, Pſal. 42. *Oh my ſoul why art thou diſquieted? David* as far as his judgment went, there was a contentedneſs, that is, his judgment was ſatisfied in the work of God upon him: and he was troubled, but he knew not wherefore *O my ſoul, why art thou thus caſt down within me?* That Pſalm is a very good Pſalm for thoſe that feel a fretting,

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diſcontented diſtemper in their hearts at any time, for them to be reading or ſinging, he hath it once or twice in that *Pſalm, Why art thou caſt down O my ſoul?* In ver. 5. *And why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, for the help of his Countenance, David* had enough to quiet him, and that that he had, prevailed with his judgment, but after it had prevailed with his judgement, he could not get it further. He could not get his grace of Contentment to go through the whole Frame of the Soul. There is a great deal of ſtir ſometimes to get contentment into their judgments, that is, to ſatisfie their judgments about their condition; Come to many, that the hand of God is upon perhaps in a grievous manner, and ſeek to ſatisfie them, and tell them that there is no ſuch cauſe to be diſquieted: O, not ſuch cauſe ſaith the troubled Spirit? O then there is no cauſe that any ſhould be diſquieted; there was never any ſuch affliction as I have; and a hundred things they have to put of what is ſaid to them, ſo as you cannot ſo much as get into their judgments to ſatisfie them; but there is a great deal of hope of contentment, if once your judgments come to be ſatisfied, that you can ſit down and ſay in your judgments, I ſee cauſe to be contented; but though you have gotten thus far, yet you may have much to do with your hearts afterwards: For there is ſuch unrulineſs in our thoughts and affections, that our judgments are not able always to rule our thoughts and affections, and that makes me to ſay, That contentment is an inward, quiet, gracious frame of ſpirit, that is the whole Soul, Judgment, Thoughts, Will, Affections and all are ſatisfied and quiet. I ſuppoſe in the very opening this, you begin to ſee it is a Leſſon you had need learn, and it is not a thing ſoon got, if Contentment be ſuch a thing as this is.

The ſecond Thing is this, which is very obſervable, *That ſpiritual contentment comes from the frame of the Soul.* A man or woman that is contented in a right way, their Contentment doth not ſo much come from outward arguments, or any outward thing that helps them to be content, as it doth from the diſpoſition of their own hearts; it is the diſpoſition of their own hearts that cauſes this contentment, that brings forth this Gracious Contentment rather than any external Thing that

doth it; as thus I would open my ſelf, one that is diſquieted, ſuppoſe a child, or man, or woman, if you come and bring them ſome great matter to pleaſe them, that prehaps will quiet them; and they will be contented; it is the thing you bring them that quiets them, but it is not the diſpoſition of their own ſpirits, not from any good temper that there is in their own hearts: but from ſome external thing that is brought them: but when a Chriſtian is contented in a right way, the quiet doth come more from the inward temper and diſpoſition of their own hearts than from any external arguments, or poſſeſſion of any thing in the world. I would yet open this further to you in this Similitude, The being content upon ſome external thing, it is like the warming of a mans cloaths by the fire; but being content by the inward diſpoſition of the ſoul, it is like the warmth that a mans cloath hath from the natural heat of his body: A man that is of a healthful body, he puts on his cloaths, and perhaps when he puts them on at the firſt in a cold morning he feels his cloaths cold, but after he hath them on a little while they are warm; why how come they warm; they come not nigh the fire: No, but it came from the natural heat of his body. Now a ſickly man that hath his natural heat decayed, if he put on his cloaths cold, they will not be hot in a long time, but he muſt have them warmed by the fire, and then they will quickly be cold again; So this will difference the Contentments of men. There are ſome men now that are very gracious, and when an affliction comes upon them, indeed at firſt it ſeems to be a little cold, but after it hath been on a while, the very temper of their hearts being gracious, it makes their afflictions eaſie and makes them quiet under it, and not to complain of any Diſcontentment. But now you ſhall have others that have an affliction upon them, that have not this good temper in their hearts, their affliction are very cold upon them, and grievous; and it may be if you bring them ſome external arguments, ſomewhat from without, as the fire that warms the cloaths, perhaps they will be quiet for a while: but alas, wanting a gracious diſpoſition within, in their own hearts, that warmth will not hold long. The warmth of the fire that is, a Contentment that comes meerly from external arguments will not hold

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long, but that holds that doth come from the gracious temper of the Spirit, It is from the frame and disposition of the spirit of a man or woman. There's the true Contentment. But this we shall speak to farther in the opening of the *Mystery of Contentment.*

The third thing is this, *It is the frame of Spirit that shews the habitualness of this grace of Contentment*, Contentment is not meerly one act, a flash in a good mood, you shall have many men and women, that take them in some good mood and they will be very quiet; but this will not hold, this is not a constant way, there is not a constant tenour of their spirits to be holy and gracious under affliction: But I say, It is the quiet frame of spirit, by that I mean, The habitual disposition of their Souls, that it is not onely at this time, and the other time when you take men and women in a good mood: but it is the constant tenour and temper of the heart; that is a Christian that hath learned this lesson of Contentment, that in the constant tenour and temper of heart is contented, and can carry its self quietly in a constant way, or else it is worth nothing; for there is no body that is so furious in their discontent, but will be quiet in some good mood or other. Now First it is a heart-business; Secondly, it is the heart-quiet; and then Thirdly, it is the frame of the heart.

But Fourthly, *It is the* [*gracious*] *frame of the heart.* Indeed in Contentment there is a composition of all graces; If the contentment be Spirituall, if it be truly Christian, there is I say a composition of all Spiritual graces; As it is in some Oyls, there is a composition of a great many very precious Ingredients: so in this grace of Contentment which we shall yet further spake of in the opening of the excellency of it. But now the gracious frame of Spirit is in opposition to Three things?

1. First, *in opposition to the natural stilness that there is in many men and women.* There are some of such a natural constitution that makes them to be more still and more quiet than others: others are of a violent and hot constitution, and they are more impatient than others.

2. Secondly, *In opposition to a sturdy resolution* As some men through the strength of some sturdy resolution, they have not seemed

seemed to be troubled, let come what will come: And so it may be through a sturdy resolution at some times they are not so much disquieted as others are.

Thirdly. *In way of distinction, from the very strength of reason* (though not sanctified) *the strength of natural reason may quiet the Heart in some measure.* But now I say, a gracious frame of spirit is not a meer stilness of body through a natural constitution and temper, nor sturdiness of resolution, nor meerly through the strength of reason.

You will say, wherein is this graciousness of Contentment distinguisht from all these? More of this will be spoken to when we shew the Mystery of it, and the lessons that are learned, but now we may speak a little by way of distinction here; as now, From the natural stilness of mens Spirits; many men and women have such a natural stilness of Spirit and constitution of Body, that you shall find them seldom disquieted. But now mark these kind of people that are so, they likewise are very dull, of a dull spirit in any good thing, they have no quickness, nor livelyness of Spirit in that which is good; but now Mark where contentment of heart is gracious, the heart is very quick and lively in the service of God, yea the more any gracious heart can bring it self to be in a contented disposition, Oh the more fit it is for any service of God, and is very active and lively in Gods service, not dull in the service of God: And as a Contented heart is very active and stirring in the work of God, so he is very active and stirring in sanctifying Gods Name in the affliction that doth befal him: The difference will appear very clear thus, One that is of a still disposition, he is not disquieted indeed as others, neither hath he any activeness of Spirit in sanctifying the Name of God in the affliction: But now one that is content in a gracious way as he is not disquieted, but keeps his heart quiet in respect to vexing and trouble, so on the other side, he is not dull nor heavy, but is very active to sanctifie Gods Name in the affliction that is upon him, for it is not enough meerly not to murmur, not to be discontented and troubled, but you must be active in the sanctifying Gods name in the affliction. And indeed this will distinguish it from the other, from a sturdy resolution, I will

will not be troubled: But though you have a ſturdy reſolution that you will not be troubled, is there a conſcionableneſs in you to ſanctifie Gods name in your affliction, and doth it come from thence? That is the main thing that brings the quiet of heart, and helps againſt diſcontentedneſs in a gracious heart. I ſay, the deſire and care that thy ſoul hath to ſanctifie Gods Name, in an affliction, it is that that quiets the ſoul, which doth not in the other: Neither when it is meerly from reaſon. As *Socrates*, it is ſaid of him (though he was but an Heathen) that whatever befell him, he would not ſo much as change his countenance, and he got this power over his ſpirit meerly by ſtrength of reaſon and morality: But now this gracious Contentment comes from principals beyond the ſtrength of reaſon. I cannot open that (from whence it comes) till we come to open the *Myſtery of ſpiritual Contentment*. I will only give you this one note of difference between a Man and a Woman that is contented in a natural way, and another that is contented in a ſpiritual way. Thoſe that are contented in a natural way they overcome themſelves when outward afflictions do befall them, they are contented, yea and they are contented as well when they commit ſin againſt God, either when they have outward croſſes, or when God is diſhonoured, it is all one, either when themſelves are croſt or when God is croſt; but now a gracious heart that is contented with its own affliction yet mightily riſes when God is diſhonoured.

The fifth is [*Freely*] *ſubmitting to, and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe*, it is a free work of the Spirit: Now there are four things to be opened in this freedom of ſpirit.

Firſt, That the heart is readily brought over, that which one doth freely there is no great ſtir to bring them to it; there are many men and women when their afflictions are grievous upon them, with much ado they are brought to be contented, a great deal of ſtir there is to quiet their hearts when they are under affliction, yet at laſt perhaps they are brought to it: but now this doth not come off freely: If I deſire a thing of another, and I get it perhaps with much ado, and a great deal of ſtir there is, but here's no freedom of Spirit: But when a man is free in a thing, do but mention it, and he preſently comes off to

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it. So if you have learned this art of Contentment, you will not only be contented after a great deal of do to quiet your hearts, but readily as soon as ever you do come to think that it is the hand of God, your heart presently closeth.

Secondly, *freely, that is not by constraint* not patience by force (as we use to say.) As many say that you must be content, this is the hand of God, and there is no help for it; Oh this is too low an expression for Christians, yet when Christians come to visit one another, they say Friend or Neighbor you must be content, this is too low an expression for a Christian, *Must be content*, No, readily, and freely I will be content. It is suitable to my heart to yield to God and to be content, I find it a thing that comes off of it self, that my soul will be content. Oh you should answer your Friends so, that come and tell you you must be content, nay I am willing to yield to God, and I am freely content, that's the Second. And then a free act it comes after a rational way, that's freedom, that is, it doth not come through ignorance, because I know no better condition, or that I know not what my affliction is, but it comes through a sanctified judgment, for that is the reason that no Creature can do an act of Freedom, but the rational creature: the liberty of action is only in rational creatures, and it comes from hence, for that's only freedom and out of liberty that's wrought in a rational way, as a natural freedom is when I by my judgment see what is to be done, understand the thing, and then there is a closing with what I do understand in my judgement, that is freely done; but now if a man doth a thing and understands not what he doth, he cannot be said to do freely. So if men are contented, but it is because they understand not what their affliction is, or beeause they understand no better, this is not freely: as for instance, suppose a Child born in a Prison and never in all his life went out, the Child is contented, Why? Because he never knew better, but this is no free act of Contentation. But now for men and women that do know better, that know that the condition in which they are in, it is an afflicted condition, and a sad condition, and yet they can bring their hearts to a Contentation out of a sanctified judgment, this is freedom.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *This freedom, it is in opposition to stupidness*, for a man and woman may be contented meerly out of want of sense, this is not free, as a man in a dead palsie that doth not feel you nip his flesh, he is not freely patient; but if one should have his flesh nipt, and feel it, and yet for all that can be able to bridle himself, and do it freely, that is another matter. So it is here, many are contented meerly out of stupidness, they have a dead palsie upon them; but now a gracious heart hath sense enough, and yet is contented, and therefore is free.

Sixthly, *Freely* [*submitting*] *to, and taking complacency in Gods dispose.* Submitting to Gods dispose, What is that? The word *Submit*, it signifies nothing else, but to send under; as thus, One that is discontented, the heart will be unruly, and would even get above God so far as discontentment prevails; but now comes the grace of Contentment and sends it under; to submit, it is to send under a thing; now when the soul comes to see the unrulines that there is in it, here's the hand of God that brings an affliction, and my heart is troubled and discontented; what saith the soul? wilt thou be above God? Is it not Gods hand, and must thy will be regarded more than Gods? O under, under, thou shalt get under, keep under, keep low, keep under Gods feet; thou art under Gods feet, and keep under his feet, keep under the Authority of God, the Majesty of God, the Soveraignty of God, the Power that God hath over thee: Keep under, that is to submit; then the soul can submit to God when it can send it self under the power and authority, and Soveraignty, and Dominion that God hath over it; that is the Sixth Particular: yea but that is not enough, yet you have not got to this grace of Contentment, except in the next place you take,

Seventhly, *Taking a* [*complacency*] *in Gods dispose.* That is thus, I am well pleased in what God doth, so far as I can see God in it, though as (I said) I may be sensible of the affliction, and may desire that God in his due time would take it off; and use means to take it off; yet I may be well pleased so far as Gods hand is in it. To be well pleased with Gods hand, that is a higher degree than the other: and this comes from hence, not only because I see that I should be content in this affliction, but

because I see that there is good in this affliction. I find there is honey in this rock, and so I do not onely say, *I must*, or *I will* submit to Gods hand: no, but the hand of God is good; it is *good that I am afflicted*. That it is just that I am afflicted, that may be in one that is not truly contented, I may be convinced that God deals justly in this, God is righteous and just, and 'tis fit I should submit to what he hath done, O the Lord hath done righteously in all his ways: but that is not enough, but thou must say Good is the hand of the Lord, the expression of old *Ely*, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, when it was a sore and hard word, that word that did threaten very grievous things to *Ely* and his house, and yet, good is the word of the Lord, saith *Ely*. Perhaps some of you may say as *David*, it is good that I was afflicted; nay you must come to say thus *It is good that I am afflicted*. Not good when you see the good fruit that it hath wrought, but when you are afflicted to say, It is good that I am afflicted. What: ever the affliction be yet through the mercy of God my condition is a good condition; it is the top indeed, and the height of this art of Contentment to come to this pitch, to be able to say, Well my condition and afflictions are thus and thus, and is very grievous and sore, yet I am through Gods mercy in a good condition, and the hand of God is good upon me notwithstanding. Now I should have given you divers Scriptures about this, I shall but give you one or two that are very remarkable; you will think this is a hard lesson to come thus far, not only to be quiet, but to have a complacency in affliction, Prov. 16.6. *In the house of the righteous is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.* Here's a Scripture now that will shew that a gracious heart hath cause to say, it is in a good condition whatever it be. In the house of the Righteous is much Treasure; his house, what house? it may be a poor cottage, perhaps he hath scarce a stool to sit on; perhaps he is fain to sit upon a stump of wood, a peice of a block instead of a stool; or perhaps he hath scarce a bed to lie upon, or a dish to eat in; yet saith the holy Ghost, in the house of the righteous is much treasure: Let the righteous man be the poorest man in the world: it may be there are some that have come and taken all the goods out of his house for debt; perhaps his house is plundered and

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all is gone, yet ſtill, *In the houſe of the righteous is much Treaſure*; the righteous man can never be brought to be ſo poor to have his houſe rifled and ſpoiled, but there will remain much treaſure within, if he hath but a diſh or a ſpoon or any thing in the World in his houſe, there will be much treaſure; ſo long as he is there, there is the preſence of God and the bleſſing of God upon him, and therein is much treaſure; but in the revenues of the wicked there is trouble; There is more treaſure in the pooreſt bodies houſe, if he be Godly, than in the houſe of the greateſt man in the world, that hath his brave hangings, and brave wrought beds, and chairs and couches, and cupbords of plate, and the like; what ever he hath, he hath not ſo much treaſure in it, as in the houſe of the pooreſt righteous ſoul; therefore in a verſe or two after my Text, no marvel though S. *Paul* (ſaith he) was content, you ſhall ſee in *Phil.* 4. 18. *But I have all, and I abound, I am full*, I have all: Alas poor man! what had S. *Paul* that could make him ſay he had all, where was there ever man more afflicted then S. *Paul* was? many times he had not tatters to hang about his body, to cover his nakedneſs, he had not bread to eat, he was often in nakedneſs, and put in the ſtocks and whipt and cruelly uſed, *yet I have all* (ſaith S. *Paul*) for all that you ſhall have it in 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. He profeſſes there, *That he did poſſeſs all things, as ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things*, but mark what he ſaith, it is, *As having nothing*, but it is *Poſſeſſing all things*, he doth not ſay, as poſſeſſing all things, but poſſeſſing all things; it is very little I have in the world, but yet poſſeſſing all things: So that you ſee a Chriſtian hath cauſe to take complacency in Gods hand, whatſoever his hand be.

The Eight thing in Contentment it is ¶ *In Gods diſpoſe*] *Submitting to and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe.* That is, the ſoul that hath learned this leſſon of Contentment, looks up to God in all things; looks not down to the inſtruments or the means, as ſuch a man did it, and it was unreaſonableneſs of ſuch and ſuch inſtruments, and the like barbarous uſage of ſuch and ſuch, but looks up to God; a contented heart looks to Gods diſpoſe, and ſubmits to Gods diſpoſe, that is, ſees the wiſdom of

God in all, in his ſubmiſſion ſees his ſoveraignty, but that that makes him take complacency, it is Gods wiſdom: the Lord knows how to order things better than I, the Lord ſees further than I do, I ſee things but at preſent, but the Lord ſees a great while hence, and how do I know but had it not been for this affliction, I had been undone? I know that the love of God *may as well ſtand with an afflicted eſtate, as with a proſperous eſtate*; and ſuch kind of reaſonings there are in a contented ſpirit, ſubmitting unto the diſpoſe of God.

The laſt thing is, *This in* [*every condition*] It may be in ſome things you could be content: You ſhall have many will ſay, if my affliction were but as the affliction of ſuch an one I could be content, yea but it muſt be in the preſent affliction that is upon you. We uſe to ſay, There is a great deal of deceit in Univerſals; in the general, come to any man or woman and ſay, will you not be content with Gods diſpoſe? Yes, ſay they: God forbid but we ſhould ſubmit to Gods hand whatever it be: you ſay thus in the general, it is an eaſie matter to learn this leſſon, but when it comes to the particular, when the croſs coms indeed; when it ſtrikes you in the heavieſt croſs that you think could befall you, what ſaith your heart now? Can you in every condition be content not only for the matter, but for time, that is to be in ſuch a condition ſo long as God would have you, to be content to be at Gods time in that condition, to have ſuch an affliction ſo long as God would have the affliction abide upon you, to be willing to ſtay and not to come out of the affliction no ſooner than the Lord would have you come out of it? you are not content in your condition elſe; to be content meerly that I have ſuch a hand of God upon me, and not to ſtay under the hand of God, that is not to be content under every condition, but when I can find my heart ſubmitting to Gods diſpoſe in ſuch particular afflictions that are very hard, and very grievous, and yet my heart is quiet, here is one that hath learned the leſſon of Contentment: Contentment, it is the inward, quiet, gracious frame of ſpirit, freely Submitting to and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe in every condition: That is the deſcription. Now in this there hath been Nine ſeveral things opened.

1. Firſt,

1. First, that Contentment is a heart work within the soul. 2. Secondly, it is the quieting of the heart. 3. Thirdly it is the frame of the spirit. 4. Fourthly. It is a gracious frame. 5. Fifthly, It is the free working of this gracious frame. 6. Sixtly, There is in it a submission to God, sending the soul under God. 7. Seventhly, There is a taking complacency in the hand of God, 8. Eightly, All to Gods dispose. 9. Ninthly, in every condition, every condition though never so hard, though it continue never so long; Now those of you that have learned to be content, have learned to attain unto these several things; the very opening of these things I hope may so far work upon your hearts as, First, That you may lay your hands upon your hearts upon this that hath been said, the very telling of you what the lesson is I say may cause you to lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, Lord I see there is more in Christian Contentation than I thought there was, and I have been far from learning this lesson, I indeed have learned but my A B C in this lesson of Contentment, I am but in the lower form in Christs school if I am in it all: but these we shall speak to more afterward; but the special thing I aim'd at in the opening of this point, is to shew how great a Mistery there is in Christian Contentment; and how many several lessons are to be learned, that we may come to attain to this Heavenly disposition, that Saint *Paul* did attain to.

SERMON.

SERMON II. *At* Stepney, *August* 3. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

WE have made entrance (you may remember) into the argument of *Christian Contentment*. And have opened the words, and shewed you what this *Christian Contentation* is; that it is, the inward, quiet, gracious frame of Spirit, freely submitting to, and taking Complacency in Gods disposé in every condition. And therein came to this last thing [*In every condition*] Now we shall a little inlarge that, and so proceed.

1. *Submitting to God in whatever Affliction befalls us: for the kind.*

2. *For the time and continuance of the affliction.*

3. *For the variety and changes of affliction*: Let them be what they will, yet there must be a submitting to Gods disposé in every condition.

First for the kind; Many men and women will in general say, that they must submit to God in affliction; I suppose now if you should come from one end of this Congregation to another, and speak to every soul thus: would you submit to Gods disposé, in whatever condition he should disposé of you to; you will say, God forbid it should be otherwise, but we use to say, *There is a great deal of deceit in generals.* In general you would submit to any thing: but what if it be in this and that particular that is most cross to you. Then any thing but that: we are usually apt to think that any condition is better than

than the condition that God doth diſpoſe us to, now here is not Contentment, it ſhould not be only to any condition in general but for the kind of affliction, if it be that which is moſt croſs to you. God (it may be) ſtrikes you in your Child. Oh if it had been in my eſtate ſaith one, I ſhould be content; perhaps he ſtrikes you in your match, Oh ſaith he, I had rather have been ſtrucken in my health; and if he had ſtruck you in your health, Oh then if it had been in my trading I would not have cared; but we muſt not be our own carvers, what particular afflictions God ſhall diſpoſe us to, there muſt be Contentment in them.

Secondly, *There muſt be a ſubmiſſion to God in every affliction, for the time and continuance of the affliction.* It may be ſaith one, I could ſubmit and be content, but this affliction hath been upon me a long time, a quarter of a year, a year, divers years, I know not how to yield and ſubmit to it, my patience is even worn and broke: yea it may be it is a ſpiritual affliction. You could ſubmit to God you ſay in any outward affliction, but not in a ſoul affliction, or if it were an affliction upon the ſoul, trouble upon the heart, if it were the withdrawing of Gods face, yet if this had been but for a little time I could ſubmit; but ſeeking of God ſo long a time and yet God doth not appear, Oh how ſhall I bear this! We muſt not be our own diſpoſers for the *time* of deliverance no more than the *kind* and *way* of deliverance, and I will give you a Scripture or two about this; That we are to ſubmit unto God for the time as well as the kind, in the latter end of the 1 *Ch.* of *Ezek. When I ſaw it I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that ſpake*, (the Prophet was caſt down upon his face, but how long muſt he lie upon his face) *And he ſaid unto me, Son of man ſtand upon thy feet and I will ſpeak unto thee, and the ſpirit entred into me, when he ſpake unto me and ſet me upon my feet. Ezekiel* was caſt down upon his face, and there he muſt lie till God bid him ſtand up, yea and not only ſo, but till Gods Spirit came into him to enable him to ſtand up: So when God caſts us down, we muſt be content to lie till God bids us ſtand up, and Gods Spirit enter into us to enable us to ſtand up. So you know *Noah* he was put into the Ark, certainly he knew there was much affliction in the Ark, having all

kind

kind of creatures shut up with him for twelve months together, it was a mighty thing, yet God shutting him up (though the waters were asswaged). *Noah* was not to come out of the Ark till God bid him: So though we be shut up in great affliction, and we may think there may be this and that & the other means to come out of that affliction, yet till God doth open the door we should be willing to stay; God hath put us in, and God is to bring us out: As we read in the acts of S. *Paul*, when they had shut him in Prison & would have sent him out: Nay, saith S. *Paul* they shut us in, let them come & fetch us out: So in a holy gracious way should a soul say, well, this affliction that I am brought into, it is by the hand of God, and I am content to be here till God brings me out himself. God doth require at our hands, that we should not be willing to come out till he comes and fetches us out. In *Josh.* 4. 10. you have a notable history there that may very well serve our purpose; we read of the Priests, that the Priests bare the Ark and stood in the midst of *Jordan*: you know when the children of Israel went into the Land of *Canaan* they went through the River of *Jordan*. Now the going through the river of *Jordan* was a very dangerous thing; only God bad them to go, they might have been afraid that the water might have come in upon them: but mark, it is said, *The Preists that bare the Ark stood in the midst of Jordan till every thing was finished that the* Lord *commanded* Joshua *to speak unto to the People, according to all that* Moses *commanded* Joshua, *and the People hasted and passed over: and it came to pass when all the People were clean passed over, that the Ark of the Lord passed over, and the Priests in the presence of the people.* Now it was Gods dispose that all the people should pass over first, that they should be safe upon the land; but the Priest they must stand still till all the people be passed over, and then they must have leave to go, but they must stay till God would have them go, stay in all that danger, for certainly in reason and sence there was a great deal of danger in staying: for the text saith, the people hasted over, but the preists they must stay till the people be gone, stay till God calls them out from that place of danger: and so many times it doth prove that God is pleased to dispose of things so that the Ministers must stay longer in danger than the

people

ple, and Magistrate and those in publick place, which should make people to be satisfied and contented with a lower condition that God hath put them into: Though your condition be low, yet you are not in that danger that those are in that are in a higher condition; God calls them in publick place to stand longer in the gap or place of danger then other people, but we must be content to stay even in *Jordan* till the Lord shall be pleased to call us out.

And then for the variety of our condition, we must be content with the particular affliction, and the times and all the circumstances about the affliction; for sometimes the circumstances are greater afflictions than the affliction themselves; & for the variety if God will exercise us with various afflictions one after another: As that hath been very observable even of late, that many that have been plundered, and come away, afterwards have fallen sick and died: They have fled for their lives and afterwards the plague hath come among them, & if not that affliction it may be some other affliction. It is very rare that one affliction comes alone, commonly afflictions are not single things but they come one upon the neck of another: It may be God strikes one in his estate, then in his body, then in his name, wife, or child, or dear friend, and so it comes in a various way: it is the way of God ordinarily (you may find it by experience) that seldom one affliction comes alone, now this is hard when one affliction follows after another when there is variety of afflictions, when there is a mighty change in a condition: up and down this way, and that way; there indeed is the trial of a Christian; there must be a submission to Gods dispose in them. I remember it is said even of *Cato* that was an heathen, that no man saw him to be changed, though he lived in a time when the Commonwealth was so often changed, yet it is said of him, he was the same though his condition was changed, and he run through variety of conditions. Oh that it could be said so of many Christians, that though their conditions be changed, yet that no body could see *them* changed, they are the same. Look what gracious, sweet and holy temper they were in before, that they are in still: thus we are to submit to the dispose of God in every condition.

Obj. But you will say, This that you speak of is good in-

deed if we could attain to it, but is it possible for one to attain to this?

Answ. It is if you get skill in the Art of it, you may attain to it, and it will prove to be no such difficult thing to you neither, if you understand but the Mystery of it; as there's many things that men do in their callings, that if a country man comes and sees, he thinks it is a mighty hard thing, and that he should never be able to do it, but that's because he understands not the art of it, there is a turning of the hand so as you may do it with ease. Now that's the business of this exercise, to open unto you the Art and Mistery of Contentment: What way a Christian comes to contentment, there is a great Mistery and Art in it; by that that hath been opened to you there will appear some Mistery and Art, as that a man should be content with his affliction and yet throughly sensible of his affliction too; to be throughly sensible of an affliction, and to endeavour the removing of it by all lawful means, and yet to be content, there's a Mistery in that, how to joyn these two together, to be sensible of an affliction as much as that man or woman that is not content, I am sensible of it as fully as they, and I seek ways to be delivered from it as well as they, and yet still my heart abides content, this is I say a Mistery that is very hard to be understood by a carnal heart; but grace doth teach such a mixture doth teach us how to make mixture of sorrow and a mixture of joy together; and that makes Contentment, the mingling of joy and sorrow, of gracious joy and gracious sorrow together, grace teaches us how to moderate and to order an affliction so as there shall be a sense of it, and yet for all that, Contentment under it.

There are divers things further for the opening of the Mistery of Contentment.

The first thing therefore is this, *To shew that there is a great Mistery in it.* One that is contented in a Christian way, it may be said of him that he is the most-*contented* man in the world, and yet the most unsatisfied man in the world, these two together must needs be misterious, I say a contented man as he is the most contented, so he is the most unsatisfied of any man in the world. You never learned the Mistery of Contentment except

except it may be ſaid of you, that as you are the moſt content-ed man, ſo you are the moſt unſatisfied man in the world.

You will ſay, how is that? A man that hath learned the art of Contentment is the moſt contented with any low condition that he hath in the world, and yet he cannot be ſatisfied with the injoyment of all the world, and yet he is contented if he hath but a cruſt, but bread and water, that is, if God diſpoſe of him for the things of the world, to have but bread and water for his preſent condition, he can be ſatisfied with Gods diſpoſe in that, yet if God ſhould give unto him Kingdoms and Empires, all the world to rule, if he ſhould give it him for his portion, he would not be ſatisfied with that, here's the myſtery of it, though his heart be ſo enlarged, as the injoyment of all the world and ten thouſand worlds cannot ſatisfie him for his portion; yet hath a heart quieted under Gods diſpoſe, if he gives him but bread and water: to joyn theſe two together this muſt needs be a great Art and Miſtery. Though he be contented with God in a little, yet thoſe things that would content other men, will not content him; The men of the world they ſeek after eſtates, and think if they had thus much, and thus much, they would be content, they aim at no great matters; but if I had (perhaps ſome man thinks) but two or three hundred a year, then I ſhould be well enough; if I had but a hundred a year, or a thouſand a year (ſaith another) then I ſhould be ſatisfied: but ſaith a gracious heart, If he had ten hundred thouſand times ſo much a year, it would not ſatisfie him, if he had the quinteſſence of all the excellencies of all the creatures in the world, it could not ſatisfie him, yet this man can ſing, and be merry, and joyful when he hath but a cruſt of bread and a little water in the world: Surely Religion is a great Miſtery, great is the Miſtery of Godlineſs, not only in the Doctrinal part of it, but in the Practical part of it alſo. Godlineſs teaches us this Miſtery, Not to be ſatisfied with all the world for our portion, and yet to be content with the meaneſt condition in which we are. As *Luther*, when he had great gifts ſent him from Dukes and Princes, he refuſed them, and ſaith he, I did vehemently proteſt God ſhould not put me off ſo; 'tis not that which will content me. A little in the world will content a Chriſtian for his

passage: Mark, here lies the Mistery of it. A little in the World will content a Christian for his passage, but all the world and ten thousand times more, will not Content a Christian for his *Portion*: Now a carnal heart will be Content with these things of the world for his portion: and there is the difference between a Carnal heart and a gracious heart: But saith a gracious heart, Lord do with me what thou wilt for my passage through this world, I will be content with that, but I cannot be content with all the world for my portion; so there is the Mistery of true Contentation. A contented man though he be the most contented with the least things in the world; yet he is the most unsatisfied man that lives in the world. That Soul that is capable of God, can be filled with nothing else but God; nothing but God can fill a soul that is capable of God, though a gracious heart knows that it is capable of God, and was made for God; Carnal heart think of no reference to God but a gracious heart being inlarged to be capable of God, and injoying somewhat of him, nothing in the world can fill a gracious heart, it must be only God himself; and therefore you shall observe, That let God give what he will to a gracious heart, a heart that is godly, except he gives himself, it will not do; a godly heart will not only have the mercy, but the God of that mercy, as well as its self, and then a little matter is enough in the world, so be it he hath the God of that mercy he doth enjoy; In *Phil.* 4. 7, 9. I shall need go no further to shew a notable Scripture for this, Compare vers. 7. with ver. 9. *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.* The peace of God shall keep your heart. Then in verse 9. *Those things which you have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you, The peace of God shall keep you and the God of peace shall be with you.* This is that that I would observe from the Text, That the peace of God is not enough to a gracious heart, except it may have the God of that peace. A carnal heart could be satisfied if he might but have outward peace, though it be not the peace of God; peace in the State and his trading would satisfie him: but mark how a godly heart goes beyond a carnal, all outward peace is not enough, but I must have

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the peace of God: But suppose you have the peace of God will not that quiet you? No, I must have the God of peace; as the peace of God, so the God of peace, that is, I must enjoy that God that gives me the peace; I must have the cause as well as the effect; I must see from whence my peace comes, and enjoy the fountain of my peace, as well as the stream of my peace; and so in other mercies, have I health from God? I must have the God of my health to be my portion, or else I am not satisfied. It is not life, but the God of my life; it is not the riches, but the God of those riches that I must have, the God of my preservation, as well as my preservation; a gracious heart is not satisfied without this; to have the God of the mercy as well as the mercy, In *Ps.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the Earth that I desire besides thee.* It is nothing in Heaven or Earth, can satisfie me, but thy self; if God give thee not only Earth but Heaven that thou shouldest rule over Sun, Moon and Stars, and have rule over the highest of the sons of men, it would not be enough to satisfie thee, except thou hadst God himself; there lies the first Mistery of Contentment; and truly a contented man, though he be the most contented man in the world, yet he is the most unsatisfied man in the world, that is, Those things that will satisfie the world, will not satisfie him.

Secondly, There is this Mistery in Christian Contentation. *A Christian comes to Contentment, not so much by way of addition, as by way of Substraction,* this is his way of Contentment, and that is a way that the world hath no skill in. I open it thus, Not so much by the adding to what he would have, or to what he hath not by adding more to his condition; but rather by substracting of his desires, and so to make his desires and condition to be even and equal. A carnal heart knows no way to be Contented but this, I have such and such an estate, and if I had this added to it, and the other comfort added that now I have not, then I should be contented? it may be I have lost my Estate, if I could have but that given to me, so as to make up my loss then I should be a contented man: But now Contentment doth not come in that way, it comes not in I say by the adding to what thou wantest, but by the substracting of thy desires; it is all one to a Christian either that I may get up into what I would

would have, or get my deſires down to what I have: either that I may attain to what I do deſire, or bring down my deſires to what I have already attained; my eſtate is the ſame, for it is as ſuitable to me to bring my deſire down to my condition, as it is to raiſe up my condition to my deſire. Now I ſay a heart that hath no grace, and is not inſtructed in this Myſtery of Contentment, knows no way to get Contentment, but to have his eſtate raiſe up to his deſires; but the other hath another way to Contentment, that is, he can bring his deſire down to his eſtate, and ſo he doth attain to his Contentment. So the Lord faſhions the hearts of the Children of men: Now if the heart of a man be faſhioned to his condition, he may have as much contentment as if his condition be faſhioned to his heart; ſome men have a mighty large heart, but they have a ſtraight condition; and they can never have Contentment when their hearts are big and their condition is little; but now though a man cannot bring his condition to be as big as his heart, yet if he can bring his heart to be as little as his condition; to bring them even, from thence is Contentment. The world is infininitely deceived in this, To think that Contentment lies in having more than they have; here lies the bottom and root of all Contentment, when there is an evenneſs and proportion between our hearts and our condition; and that is the reaſon that many that are godly men, are in a low condition, live more ſweet and comfortable lives than thoſe that are richer: Contentment is not always cloathed with ſilk and purple, and velvets, but Contentment is ſometimes in a ruſſet ſuit, in a mean condition as well as a higher; and many men that ſometimes have had great eſtates, and God hath brought them into a lower condition, they have had more Contentment in that condition than in the other; Now how can that poſſibly be? Thus eaſily, For if you did but underſtand the root of Contentment, it conſiſts in the ſuitableneſs and proportion of the ſpirit of a man to his eſtate, and the evenneſs, when one end is not longer and bigger than another: the heart is contented, there is comfort in that condition; now let God give a man never ſo great riches, yet if the Lord give him up to the pride of his heart, he will never be contented: But now let God bring any one into

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a mean condition, and then let God but faſhion and ſuit his heart to that condition and he will be content. As now in a mans going, Suppoſe a man had a mighty long Leg, and his other Leg were ſhort, why, though one of his legs be longer than ordinary, yet he could not go ſo well as a man that hath both his legs ſhorter then he. I compare a long Leg, when one is longer than another, to a man that hath a high condition, and is very rich, and a great man in the world, but he hath a great proud heart too, that is longer and larger than his condition: now this man cannot but be troubled in his condition: Now another man that is in a mean condition, his condition is low, and his heart is low too; ſo that his heart and his condition is both even together, and this man goes on with more eaſe abundantly than the other doth: ſo that now a gracious heart works after this manner, The Lord hath been pleaſed to bring down my condition, Now if the Lord bring down my heart and make it even with my condition, then I am well enough: And ſo when God brings down his condition, he doth not ſo much labour to raiſe up his condition again, as to bring down his heart to his condition: The Heathens themſelves they had a little glimps of this; they could ſay, That the beſt riches that is, it is the poverty of deſires: that is a ſpeech of a Heathen, that is, If a man or woman have their deſires cut ſhort and have no large deſires, that man and woman they are rich, when they can bring their deſires to be but low: So this is the Art of contentment. Not to ſeek to add to our conditions, but to ſubſtract from our deſires, Another hath this, The way to be rich, ſaith he, it is not by encreaſing of wealth, but by diminiſhing of our deſires; for certainly that man or woman is a rich man or woman that hath their deſires ſatisfied: now a contented man hath his deſires ſatisfied; God ſatisfies his deſires, that is, all conſidered, he is ſatisfied in his condition for the preſent to be the beſt condition, and ſo he comes to this Contentment by way of ſubſtraction and not addition.

The Third thing in the art of Contentment is this, *a Chriſtian comes to Contentment, not ſo much by getting off his burden that is upon him, as by the adding another burden to him*: this is a way that fleſh and blood hath little skill in. You will ſay how is this?

this? in this manner, art thou afflicted, and is there a great load and burden upon thee by reaſon of thy affliction? thou thinkeſt there is no way in the world to get Contentment, but O that this burden were but off! O it is a heavy load, and few know what a burden I have! What doſt thou think there is no way for the Contentment of thy ſpirit but this getting off thy burden? O thou art deceived, the way of Contentment is to add another burden, that is, labour to load and burden thy heart with thy ſin, and the heavier the burden of thy ſin is to thy heart, the lighter will the burden of thy affliction be to thy ſoul, and ſo ſhalt thou come to be content: if thy burden were lightened, that would content thee, thou thinkeſt there is no way to lighten it but to get it off, but thou art deceived, for if thou canſt get thy heart to be more burdened with thy ſin; thou wilt be leſs burdened with thy afflictions: You will ſay this is a ſtrange way, for a man or woman to get eaſe to their condition when they are burdened, to lay a greater burden upon them? You think there is no other way when you are afflicted, but to be jolly and merry, and get into company. Oh no, you are deceived, your burden will come again, alas this is a poor way to get his ſpirit quieted, poor man the burden will be upon him again; but if thou wouldeſt have thy burden light, if thou canſt get alone and examine thy heart for thy ſin, and charge thy ſoul with thy ſin; if thy burden be in thy eſtate, for the abuſe of it, or if it be a burden upon thy body, for the abuſe of thy health, and ſtrength, and the abuſe of any mercies that now the Lord hath taken away from thee, thou haſt not honoured God with thoſe mercies that thou haſt had, but thou haſt walked wantonly and careleſly; and ſo fall a bemoaning thy ſin before the Lord, and thou ſhalt quickly find the burden of thy affliction to be lighter than it was before; do but try this piece of skill and art, to get your ſoul contented with any low condition that Gods puts you into; many times in a family, when any affliction befals them, O what a deal of diſcontentment is there between man and wife, if croſt in their eſtates at Land, or ill news from Sea, or thoſe that they truſted are broke and the like, and perhaps ſomewhat in the family falls croſs between man and wife, or in reference to the chil-

children or ſervants, and there is nothing but brabling and diſcontent among them, now they many times are burdened with their own diſcontent, and perhaps will ſay one to another, This life is very uncomfortable for us to live thus diſcontented ſo as we do; but have you ever tryed this way, the husband and the wife? have you ever got alone and ſaid Come, O let us go, and humble our ſelves before God together, let us go into our chamber and humble our ſouls before God for our ſin, whereby we have abuſed thoſe mercies that God hath taken away from us, and we have provok'd God againſt us, O let us charge our ſelves with our ſin, and be humbled before the Lord together: have you tried ſuch a way as this is? Oh you would find the cloud would be taken away and the Sun would ſhine in upon you, and you would have a great deal more Contentment than ever yet you had. If a mans eſtate be broken, either by plunderers, or any other way; now how ſhall this man have Contentment? how? By the breaking of his heart; God hath broken thy eſtate, Oh ſeek to him for the breaking of thy heart likewiſe; Indeed a broken eſtate, and a whole heart, a hard heart, will not joyn together, there will be no Contentment; but a broken eſtate, and a broken heart, will ſo ſuit together, as there will be more Contentment than there was before; add therefore to the breaking of thy eſtate, the breaking of thy heart what thou canſt, and that is the way to be contented in a Chriſtian manner, which is the Third Myſtery in Chriſtian Contentation.

The fourth thing is this; *It is not ſo much the removing of the affliction that is upon us, as the changing of the affliction, the Metamorphoſing of the affliction, when it is quite turned and changed into another thing*: I mean in regard of the uſe of it, though for the matter the affliction abide ſtill. The way of contentment to a carnal heart it's only the removing of the afflictions, Oh that it may be gone; no but ſaith a gracious heart, God hath taught me a way for contentment though the affliction ſhall continue ſtill for the matter of it, but there is a vertue of grace to turn this affliction into good; it takes away but only the ſting and poyſon of it: As now, ſuppoſe poverty, A mans eſtate is loſt; well, is there no way to be contented till your eſtate be

made up again? Till your poverty be removed? Yes, certainly Christianity would teach Contentment, though poverty continues, it will teach you how to turn your poverty into spiritual riches, that you shall be poor still for your outward estate, yet but this shall be altered, whereas before it was once a natural evil to you, it comes now to be turned into a spiritual benefit to you, and so you come to be content. It is a speech of *Ambrose*, Even *poverty it self is riches unto holy men.* Godly men do make their poverty turn to be riches, they get more riches out of their poverty then ever they got out of their revenues, out of their trading in this world; they never had such incomes as they have had out of their poverty. This a carnal heart will think strange that a man shall make poverty to be the most gainful trade that ever he had in the world; I am perswaded that many Christians have found it so, that they have got more good by their poverty then ever they got by all their riches: you find it in Scripture, therefore think not this strange that I am speaking of, you do not find any one godly man that came out of an affliction worse then when he came into it, though for a while he was shaken, yet at last he was better for an affliction; but a great many godly men you find have been worse for their prosperity, scarce one godly man that you read in Scripture of but was worse for prosperity (except *Daniel* and *Nehemiah*, I do not read of any hurt they got by their prosperity that they had) scarce (I think) is any one example of any godly man but was rather worse for his prosperity then better; so that you see it's no such strange thing, neither to one that is gracious that they shall get good by their affliction: *Luther* hath such an expression in his Comment upon the 5. Chap. of the *Galatians*, in the 17 verse in his Comment upon that place saith he, *A Christian becometh a mighty worker and a wonderful Creator*, that is (saith he) to create out of heavinesse joy, out of terror comfort, out of sin righteousnesse, out of death life, and brings light out of darknesse. It was Gods prerogative and great power, his creating power to command the light to shine out of darknesse; now a Christian is partaker of the Divine Nature, so the Scripture saith, Grace it is part of the Divine Nature, and being part of the Divine Nature it hath an impression of Gods Omnipotent

Power.

Power, that is, to create light out of darkneſs, to bring good out of evil, now by this way a Chriſtian comes to be content. God hath given a Chriſtian ſuch a vertue, as can turn afflictions into mercies, can turn darkneſs into light; if a man had the power that Chriſt had when the water pots were fill'd, he could by a word turn the water into wine; if you that have nothing but water to drink, yet if you had a power to turn it into wine then you may be contented, certainly a Chriſtian hath received this power from God, to work thus miraculouſly; it is the nature of grace to turn water into wine, that is, to turn the water of your affliction, into the wine of Heavenly conſolation. If you underſtand this in a carnal way, I know it will be ridiculous, for a miniſter to ſpeak thus before you, and many carnal people are ready to make ſuch expreſſions as theſe to be ridiculous, underſtanding them in a carnal way, Juſt as *Nicodemus* in the 3. of *John*, *What! can a man be born when he is old, can he enter the ſecond time into his mothers womb and be born?* So when we ſpeak of grace that it can turn water into wine, and turn poverty into riches, and make poverty a gainful trade; ſath a carnal heart, Let them have that trade if they will, and let them have water to drink, and ſee if they can turn it into wine: Oh! take heed thou ſpeakeſt not in a ſcornful way of the ways of God; grace hath the power to turn afflictions into mercies. Two men ſhall have one affliction, and to one man it ſhall be as gall and wormwood, and it ſhall be wine and honey, and delightfulneſs, and joy, and advantage, and riches to another. This is the Myſtery of Contentment, not ſo much by removing the evil, as by metamorphoſing the evil, by changing the evil into good.

The fifth thing is this, *A Chriſtian comes to this Contentment, by making up the wants of his condition, by the performance, of the work of his condition,* This is the way of Contentment. There is ſuch a condition that I am in, many wants, I want this and the other comfort, well, how ſhall I come to be ſatisfied and content? A carnal heart thinks this, I muſt have my wants made up or elſe it is impoſſible that I ſhould be content: No, but ſaith a graicious heart, What is the duty of the condition God hath put me into? Indeed my condition is changed, I was not long

ſince in a proſperous condition, but God hath changed my condition: the Lord hath called me no more *Naomi*, but *Marah*: Now what am I to do? what can I think now are thoſe duties that God requires of me in the condition that he hath now put me into? and let me put forth my ſtrength in the performance of the duties of my preſent condition. Others they ſpend their thoughts in thoſe things that ſhall diſturb and diſquiet them; and ſo they grow more and more diſcontented; yea, but let me ſpend my thoughts in thinking what my duty is, what is the duty of my preſent condition which I am in: Oh! ſaith a man whoſe condition is changed, and he hath loſt his eſtate, Had I but my eſtate that I had heretofore, how would I uſe it to Gods Glory! But God hath made me to ſee that I did not honour him with my eſtate as I ought to have done, Oh! had I it again, I would do better then ever I did: but this may be but a temptation therefore you ſhould rather think, What doth God require of me in the condition I am now brought into? And thou ſhouldeſt labour to bring thy heart to quiet and contentment, by ſetting thy ſoul on work about the duties of thy preſent condition; and the truth is I know nothing more available for the quieting of a Chriſtian ſoul and getting Contentment than this, The ſetting thy heart on work about the duties of thy very preſent condition that now thou art in, and take heed of thy thoughts about other conditions as a meer Temptation. I cannot compare the folly of men and women that think to get Contentment with their muſing about other conditons, better than to the way of children; perhaps they are gotten upon an Hill, and they look a good way off and ſee another Hill, and they think if they were on the top of that, then they were able to touch the Clouds with their Fingers; but when they are on the top of that hill, Alaſs, then they are as far from the clouds as they were before, So it is with many that think, If they were in ſuch a condition then they ſhould have Contentment; and prehaps they get into that condition, and then they are as far from Contentment as before. But then they think if they were in another condition, they would be contented, and then when they have got into that condition, they are ſtill as far from contentment as before. No, no, let me conſider what is the duty

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of my present condition, and content my heart with this, and say, well, though I am in a low condition, yet I am serving the Counsels of God in that condition wherein I am; it is the Counsel of God that hath brought me into this condition that I am in, and I desire to serve the Counsel of God in that condition. There is a notable Scripture concerning *David*: It is said of him, That he served his Generation, after *David* had served his Generation according to the Will of God, then he slept. It is a Speech of St. *Paul* concerning him, in *Acts* 13. 36. So it is in your Books, *After he had served his Generation according to the Will of God*: But now the word that is Translated *Will*, it is the *Counsel of God*: and so it may be translated as well, *That after* David *in his Generation had served Gods Counsel, then he fell asleep.* We ordinarily take the words thus, that *David served his Generation*; that is, he did the work of his Generation, that is to serve a mans Generation. But it is more plain, if you read it thus: *After* David *in his Generation had served the Counsel of God, then* David *fell asleep.* O that should be the care of a Christian to serve our Gods counsel. What is the counsel of God? The condition that I am in God doth put me into it by his own counsel, the Counsel of his own Will; Now I must serve Gods Counsel in my Generation, look what is the counsel of God in my condition, I must look to serve that: and so I shall have my heart quieted for the present, and shall live and die peaceably and comfortably, if I be careful to serve Gods counsel.

A sixth thing in the Mystery of Contentment is this, *A gracious heart is contented by the melting of his will and desires into Gods will and desires*, by this means he gets Contentment; and this is a Mystery to a carnal heart. It is not by having his own desires satisfied as before, but by melting his will and desires into Gods will. So that he comes to have (in one sense) his desires satisfied though he hath not the thing that before he did desire, yet he comes to be satisfied in this, because he makes his will to be all one with Gods will. This is a little higher degree than submitting to the will of God. You all say, you should submit to Gods will; but a Christian hath gotten beyond this; that is, he can make Gods will and his to be the same: so it is said

of

of Believers, that they are joyned to the Lord, and are one ſpirit; that is, look what Gods Will is, I do not only ſee reaſon to ſubmit to it, but Gods Will is my Will, When the Soul can make over (as it were) its will to God, It muſt needs then have Contentment. Others would fain get the thing they do deſire, O! but ſaith a gracious heart, that, that God would have, I would have too; I will not only yield to it, but I would have it too; A gracious heart hath learn'd this art, Not only to make the commanding Will of God to be its own will, that is, What God commands me to do, I will do it; but to make the Providential will of God, and the Operative will of God to be his will alſo: God commands this thing, which perhaps you that are Chriſtians may have ſome skill in, but whatſoever God works, you muſt will as well as what God commands, you muſt make Gods Providential will, and his Operative Will, as well your will as Gods Will, and ſo you muſt come to Contentment: Here a Chriſtian makes over his will to God, and in making over his Will to God, he hath no other will but only Gods: As ſuppoſe a man makes over his Debt to another man, If that man that I owe the Debt to, be ſatisfied and contented, I am ſatisfied becauſe I have made it over to him, and I need not be diſcontented and ſay, My Debt is not paid, and I am not ſatisfied; Yes, you are ſatisfied, for he that you made over your Debt to, he is ſatisfied. Juſt thus it is for all the world between God and a Chriſtian, a Chriſtian's heart makes over his will to God; now then, if Gods will be ſatisfied, then I am ſatisfied, for I have then no will of my own, it is melted into the Will of God; for ſo that is the excellency of grace, grace doth not only ſubject the will of God, but it doth melt the Will into Gods will, ſo that they are now but one will; what a ſweet ſatisfaction muſt the ſoul have then in this condition, when all is made over to God: You will ſay, this is hard; I will expreſs it a little more: A gracious heart muſt needs have ſatisfaction this way, becauſe godlineſs doth teach him this, To ſee that his good is more in God then in himſelf; the good of my life, and comforts, and my happineſs, and my glory, and my Riches is more in God than it is in my ſelf; (that perhaps we may ſpeak to further, when we come to the Leſſons that are to be learned)

learned) But upon this it is, that a gracious heart hath Contentment, he doth melt his will into Gods, for ſaith he, if God have glory, I have glory, Gods glory is my glory, and therefore Gods will is mine, if God have riches then I have riches, if God be magnified then I am magnified, if God be ſatisfied, then I am ſatisfied, Gods wiſdom and holineſs is mine, and therefore his will muſt needs be mine, and my will muſt needs be his; here is the art of a Chriſtian Contentment, he melts his will into the will of God, and makes over his will to God, *O Lord, thou ſhalt chooſe our inheritance for us* Pſal. 73.

The Seventh thing in the art of Contentment is this, *The Myſtery conſiſts not ſo much by bringing any thing without, to make my condition more comfortable, as to purge out ſomething that is within.* The men of the world now, when they would have Contentment, and want any thing, Oh they muſt have ſomewhat from without to content them; but ſaith a godly man, let me get ſomething out that is in already, and then I ſhall come to Contentment; As ſuppoſe a man hath an anguiſh humor that makes his drink taſt bitter, now ſaith he, you muſt put ſome Sugar into my drink, and his Wife puts in ſome, and yet the drink taſts bitter, why? becauſe the bitterneſs comes from a bitter chollerick humor within? but let the Phyſician come and give him a bitter potion to purge out the bitterneſs that is within, and then he can taſt his drink well enough: Juſt thus it is with the men of the world, Oh ſuch a condition is bitter, and if I could have ſuch and ſuch a mercy added to this mercy, then it would be ſweet; now if God ſhould put a ſpoonful or two of Sugar in, it would be bitter ſtill. But the way to Contentment is to purge out thy luſts and bitter humors. Jam. 4. 1. *From whence are wars, and ſtrifes, are they not from your luſts that are within you?* They are not ſo much from things without but from within; as ſometimes I have ſaid, It is not all the ſtorms that are abroad that can make an earthquake, but the vapors that are got within: and ſo if thoſe luſts that are within in thy heart, if they were got out, thy condition would be a contented condition. Theſe are the myſterious ways of godlineſs, that the men of the world never think of, when didſt thou ever think of ſuch a way as this is?

for

for to go and purge out the diſtempers of thy heart that are within: Here are Seven particulars now named, there were a great many more that I had thought of. And now without the underſtanding of theſe things, and the practiſe of them, you will never come to a true Contentation in your way, Oh you will be bunglers in this trade of Chriſtianity; but the right perceiving of theſe things will help you to be inſtructed in it as in a Myſtery.

SERMON III. *At* Stepney, *Auguſt* 10. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever State I am, therewith to be content.

THE Myſtery of contentment will appear yet further. A gracious heart gets Contentment in a myſterious way, a way that the world is not acquainted with.

Eightly, *He lives upon the Dew of Gods bleſſing*: It's the ſimilitude of one *Adrian Junius* ſetting out a contented man by a *Graſhopper* leaping and skipping up and down, that lives upon the dew, and he hath this motto, *I am content with what I have, and hope for better.* A Graſhopper doth not live upon the graſs as other things do, you cannot know what it feeds upon: other things though as little as Graſhoppers, yet feed upon ſeeds or little flies, and ſuch things, but the Graſhopper, you know not what it feeds upon: So a Chriſtian can get food that the world knows

knows not of, in a ſecret way is a Chriſtian fed by the dew of the bleſſing of God, a poor man or woman that hath but a little which hath grace, lives a more contented life then his rich neighbour that hath a great deal coming in: we find it ſo ordinarily, ſo that though they have but a little, yet they have a ſecret bleſſing of God going in it, that they are not able to expreſs to any other man; if you would come to them and ſay, How comes it that you live ſo comfortably as you do? they are not able to tell you what they have, but they find there is a ſweetneſs in what they do enjoy, and they know this by experience that they never had ſuch ſweetneſs in former times, that though they had more plenty in former times then now they have, yet they know they had not ſuch ſweetneſs; but how this comes they cannot tell; and we may ſhew ſome particulars, even that godly men do enjoy, that makes their condition to be ſweet.

As now, Take theſe four or five particulars that a godly man finds Contentment in what he hath, though it be never ſo little.

1. *Becauſe in what he hath, he hath the love of God*, he hath Gods love to him in what he hath. If a King ſhould ſend a piece of meat from his own table, it is a great deal more comfortable to a Courtier, then if he had twenty diſhes at ordinary allowance; if the King ſend but any little thing and ſay, go and carry this to ſuch a man as a token of my love, Oh how delighful is that unto him! are your husbands at Sea, and ſend you a token of their love, it is more then forty times ſo much that you have in your houſes already. Every good thing the pople of God do enjoy, they enjoy it in Gods love, as a token of Gods love, and coming from Gods eternal love unto them, this muſt needs be very ſweet unto them.

2. *What they have it is ſanctified unto them for good*; Other men have what they enjoy in a way of common providence, but the Saints in a ſpecial way; others have what they have, and there is all, they have meat and drink, and houſes, and cloaths, and money, and that's all. But a gracious heart finds contentment in this, I have it, and I have a ſanctified uſe of it too; I find God going along with what I have, to draw my heart neerer to him, and ſanctifie my heart to him; If I find my heart drawn

neerer to God by what I enjoy; it's more a great deal then if I have it without any ſanctifying my heart by it; there's a ſecret dew that goes a long with it, there's the dew of Gods love in it and the dew of ſanctification.

3. *A gracious heart what he hath, he hath it upon free coſt, he is not like to be called to pay for what he hath*: The difference between what a godly man hath, and a wicked man is in this: a godly man is as a Child if an Inn; an Innkeeper hath his child in his houſe, and the father provides his dyet, and lodging, and what is fit for him; Now there comes a ſtranger, and the ſtranger hath Dinner and Supper provided, and lodging, but the ſtranger muſt pay for all; it may be the childs fare is meaner than the fare of the ſtranger; the ſtranger hath boyled, and roſt, and bak'd, but he muſt pay for it, there muſt come a reckoning for it. Juſt thus it is, many of Gods people have but mean fare; but God as a father provides it, and it is on free coſt, and they muſt not pay for what they have, it is paid for before; but the wicked in all there pomp, and pride and bravery, they have what they call for, but their muſt come a reckoning for all they muſt pay for all in the concluſion: And is it not better to have a little upon free coſt, than to come to have all to pay for? grace doth ſhew a man that what he hath, he hath it on free coſt from God as from a father, and therefore muſt needs be very ſweet.

Fourthly, A godly man may very well be contemt, though he hath but little, *For what he hath, he hath it by right of Jeſus Chriſt, by the purchaſe of Jeſus Chriſt*; he hath a right to it, another manner of right to what he hath, than any wicked man can have to what he hath; a wicked man hath theſe outward things: I do not ſay they are uſurpers of what they have, but they have a right to it, and that before God, but how? It is a right by meer donation, that is, God by his free bounty doth give it to them; but the right that the Saints have, it is a right of purchaſe, it is paid for, and it is their own; and they may in a holy manner, and holy way, challenge whatſoever they have need of. We cannot expreſs the right of a holy man, the difference betwen his right and the right of the wicked more fully, than by this ſimilitude; A Malefactor that is condemned to die,

yet

yet he hath by favour granted to him his supper provided over night, and you cannot say, though the Malefactor hath forfeited all his right to all things, to every bit of bread, yet if he shall have a supper granted to him, he doth not steal it though all his right is forfeited by his fault; after he is once condemned he hath no right to any thing. So it is with the wicked, they have forfeited all their right to all comforts in this world, they are condemned by God as Malefactors & are going to execution; but if God will in his bounty give them something to preserve them here in the world, they cannot be said to be theeves or robbers: Now a man hath granted to him a supper over night before his Execution, but is that like the supper that he was wont to have in his own house, when he eat his own bread, and had his wife and children about him? Oh! a dish of green herbs at home would be a great deal better than any dainties in such a supper as that is; but now a Child of God hath not a right meerly by Donation, but what he hath it is his own through the purchase of Christ; every bit of bread that thou eatest, if thou beest a godly man or woman, Jesus Christ hath bought it for thee: thou goest to market and buyest thy meat and drink with thy money, but know that before thou hast bought it, or paid money, Christ hath bought it at the hand of God the Father with his bloud; thou hast it at the hands of men for money, but Christ hath bought it at the hands of his father by bloud: and certainly it is a great deal better and sweeter now, though it be but a little.

Fifthly, There's another thing that shews the sweetness that there is in that little that the saints have, by which they come to have contentment, whereas others cannot, that is, *Every little that they have, it is but as an earnest peny of all the glory that is reserved for them, it is given them by God, but as the forerunner of those eternal mercies that the Lord intends for them*, Now if a men hath but twelve pence given to him, as an earnest peny for some great possession that he must have, is not that better than if he had forty pounds given unto him otherwise? So every comfort that the Saints have in this world, it is an earnest peny to them of those eternal mercies that the Lord hath provided for them: as every affliction that the wicked have here, it is but the

ginning of ſorrows, and forerunner of thoſe eternal ſorrows that they are like to have hereafter in Hell; ſo every comfort thou haſt, is a forerunner of thoſe eternal mercies thou ſhalt have with God in Heaven not only the conſolations of Gods Spirit are the forerunner of thoſe eternal comforts thou ſhalt have in Heaven; but when thou ſitteſt at thy Table, and rejoyceſt with thy Wife and Children, and Friends, thou maieſt look upon every one of thoſe but as a forerunner, yea, the very earneſt peny of Eternal life unto thee. Now then if this be ſo, no marvel though a Chriſtian be contented; (this is a myſtery to the wicked:) I have what I have out of the love of God; and I have it ſanctified to me by God; and I have it of free coſt from God by the purchaſe of the bloud of Jeſus Chriſt, and I have it as a forerunner of thoſe eternal mercies that are reſerved for me; and in this my ſoul rejoyces, there's a ſecret dew of Gods goodneſs and bleſſing upon him in his eſtate, that others have not: and by all this you may ſee the meaning of that Scripture, Prov. 16. 8. *Better is a little with righteouſneſs than great revenues without right.* A man that hath but a litttle, yet if he hath it with righteouſneſs, it is better then a great deal without right; yea, better then the great revenues of the wicked: ſo you have it in another Scripture. That's the next Particular in *Chriſtian Contentment*; The Myſtery is in this, That he lives upon the dew of Gods bleſſing in all the good things that he doth enjoy.

The Ninth thing wherein the Myſtery of *Chriſtian Contentment* conſiſts, is this: *Not only the good things that he hath, he hath the dew of Gods bleſſing in them, and they are very ſweet to him: but all the afflictions, all the evils that do befal him, he can ſee love in them all; and can enjoy the ſweetneſs of love in his afflictions as well as in his mercies.* Yea, the truth is, The afflictions of Gods People come from the ſame Eternal love that Jeſus Chriſt did come from. And that ſpeech of *Hierom, He is a happy man that is beaten, when the ſtroke is a ſtroke of love.* All God ſtrokes are ſtrokes of love and mercy, *All God ways are mercy and truth to thoſe that fear him and love him*, Pſal. 25. 10. The ways of God, the ways of affliction, as well as the ways of proſperity, are mercy and love to him: grace gives a man an eye, a pierc-

a piercing eye to pierce into the counsels of God, those eternal Counsels of God for good unto him, even in his afflictions to see the love of God in every affliction, as well as in prosperity. Now this is a mystery to carnal hearts, they can see no such thing perhaps; they think God loves them when he prospers them, and makes them rich; but they think God loves them not when he doth afflict them, that's a mystery; but grace instructs men in that mystery, grace enables them to see love in the very frowns of Gods face, and so come to receive Contentment,

In the tenth place, A godly man hath Contentment in the way of a mystery, *Because as he sees all his afflictions come from the same love that Jesus Christ did: so he sees them sanctified in Jesus Christ, sanctified as a Mediator*, he sees (I say) all the sting and venom, and poyson of them all to be taken out by the vertue of Jesus Christ the Mediator betwixt God and Man: As now for Instance, Thus a Christian, when he would have Contentment, falls a working, What is my affliction? is it poverty that God strikes me withal? Jesus Christ had not a house to hide his head in; *the Fowls of the air had nests, and the Foxes had holes, but the Son of Man had not a hole to hide his head in*: now my poverty is sanctified by Christs poverty, I can see by faith the curse and sting and venom of my poverty, taken out by the poverty of Jesus Christ: Christ Jesus he was poor in this world to deliver me from the curse of my poverty; that it should not be cursed unto me; then my poverty is not afflictive, if I can be contented in such a condition. That is the way, not to stand and repine, because I have not what others have, no, but I am poor, and Christ was therefore poor that he might bless my poverty to me,

And so again, Am I discouraged, dishonored; is my good name taken away? why Jesus Christ he had dishonor put upon him, he was called *Beelzebub*, and a *Samaritan*, and they said *he had a Devil in him*; all the foul aspersions that could be, were cast upon Jesus Christ, and this was for me, that I might have the disgrace that is cast upon me to be sanctified unto me, whereas another man his heart is overwhelmed with dishonor and disgrace, and he goes this way to work to get Contentment; prehaps if you be spoken ill of, you have no

other

other way to eaſe and right your ſelves, but if they do rail upon you, you will rail upon them again; and thus you think to eaſe your ſelves, Oh! but a Chriſtian hath another manner of way to eaſe himſelf; Others rail and ſpeak ill of me, but did they not rail upon Jeſus Chriſt; and ſpeak evil of him; And what am I in compariſon of Chriſt? And the ſubjection of Chriſt to ſuch an evil, it was for me, that though ſuch a thing ſhould come upon me; I might know that the curſe of it is taken from me through Chriſts ſubjection to that evel: thus a Chriſtian can be contented when any body ſpeaks ill of him: Now this is a Myſtery to you to get Contentment, after ſuch a manner as this is. So, if men jeer and ſcoff at you, Did they not do ſo to Jeſus Chriſt? they jeered and ſcoffed at him, and that when he was in the greateſt extremity upon the Croſs, ſay they *Here's the King of the* Jews, *and they bowed the knee, and ſaid Hail King of the* Jews, and put a reed into his hand and mocked him, Now I get Contentment in the midſt of ſcorns and jeers, by conſidering that Chriſt was ſcorn'd and by acting faith upon that which Chriſt did ſuffer for me. So, am I in great pain of body? Jeſus Chriſt had as great pain upon his body as I have though its true, he had not ſuch kind of ſickneſs as we have, but yet he had as great pain and tortures in his body, and that that was deadly to him, as well as the ſickneſs is to us: The exerciſing of faith upon what Chriſt did endure, that's the way to get Contentment in the midſt of our pains, one lies vexing and fretting and cannot bear his pain; art thou a Chriſtian? haſt thou ever tryed this way of getting contentment, to act thy faith upon all the pains and ſufferings that Jeſus Chriſt did ſuffer? this would be the way of Contentment, and a Chriſtian gets contentment under pains after this manner: ſometimes one that is very godly and gracious, you ſhall have him lie under greivous pains and extremities very chearfully, and you wonder at it; this is the way that he gets it, he gets it by acting his faith upon what pains Jeſus Chriſt did ſuffer. Thou art afraid of death; the way to get contentment it is, by exerciſing thy faith upon the death of Jeſus Chriſt; yea, it may be thou haſt inward troubles in thy ſoul, and God withdraws himſelf from thee, but ſtill thy faith is to be exerciſed upon the ſuf-

ſufferings that Jeſus Chriſt endured in his ſoul, he powred forth his ſoul before God, then when he ſweat drops of water and bloud, he was in Agony in his very ſpirit, and he found even God himſelf in a way to forſake him, now the acting thy Faith upon Jeſus Chriſt thus, brings contentment; And is not this a myſtery to carnal hearts? A gracious heart finds contentmnet ina way of a myſtery; no marvel though Saint *Paul* ſaith, *I am inſtructed in a Myſtery, to be contented in whatſoever condition I am in.*

In the Eleventh place, There is yet a further myſtery (for this I hope you will find a very uſeful point unto you) and you will ſee what plain a way there is, (before we have done) for one that is skill'd in Religion to get Contentment, though it's hard for one that is carnal. I ſay, the Eleventh Myſtery in Contentment is this, *A gracious heart hath Contentment by fetching ſtrength from Jeſus Chriſt, he is able to bear his burden by fetching ſtrength from another.* Now this is a riddle indeed, and It would be a ridiculous thing to be ſpoken of in the Schools of Philoſophers, to ſay, If there be a burden upon you, you muſt fetch ſtrength from another: indeed to have another to come & ſtand under the burden, that way they would know; but that you ſhall be ſtrengthened by another's ſtrength that is not neer you to your outward view, that they would think ridiculous: but now a Chriſtian finds ſatisfaction in every condition by getting ſtrength from another, by going out of himſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, and by Faith acting upon Chriſt, and bringing the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt into its own ſoul, and thereby is enabled to bear whatſoever God laies upon him, by the ſtrength that he finds from Jeſus Chriſt, *Of his Fulneſs do we receive grace for grace*; there is ſtrength in Jeſus Chriſt not only to ſanctifie and ſave us, but ſtrength to ſupport us under all our burdens and afflictions, and Chriſt expects that when we are under any burden that we would act our *Faith* upon him to draw vertue and ſtrength from him; the acting of *Faith*, that's the great grace that is to be acted under afflictions; it's true, other graces ſhould be acted, but the grace of *Faith* it draws ſtrength from Chriſt, in looking upon him that hath the fulneſs of all ſtrength to be conveyed into the hearts of all Believers. Now

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if a man hath a burden upon him, yet if he can have ſtrength added to him; if the burden be doubled, if he can have his ſtrength to be trebled, the burden will not be heavier but lighter than it was before to our natural ſtrength. Indeed our afflictions may be heavy, and we cry out, O we cannot bear them, we cannot bear ſuch an affliction: Though thou canſt not tell how to bear it with thine own ſtrength, yet what canſt thou tell what thou ſhalt do with the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt? Thou ſaieſt thou canſt not bear it; why doſt thou think that Chriſt could not bear it? if Chriſt could bear it, why maieſt not thou come to bear it? You will ſay, can I have the ſtrength of Chriſt: Yea, that is made over to thee by faith, ſo the Scripture ſaith, *That the Lord is our ſtrength*, God himſelf is our ſtrength, and Chriſt is our ſtrength, divers Scriptures we have that way; that Chriſt ſtrength is thine, made over to thee, that ſo thou maieſt be able to bear whatſoever lies upon thee, and therefore we find ſuch a ſtrange kind of expreſſion in the Epiſtle of St. *Paul* to the *Coloſians*, praying for the Saints, *That they might be ſtrengthned with all might according unto his glorious power*, unto what? *Unto all patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs; Strengthened with all might, according to the Power of God, the glorious Power of God, unto all patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs*: You may not therefore be content with a little ſtrength, ſo that you are able to bear what a man might bear by the ſtrength of reaſon and nature; *but to be ſtrengthened with all might according to the glorious Power of God, unto all patience, and to all long ſuffering*; Oh you that are now under very heavy and ſad afflictions more than ordinary, look upon this Scripture, and conſider how this Scripture is made good in you, why may you not have this Scripture made good in you, if you be godly? You ſhould not be quiet in your own ſpirits except that you in ſome meaſure do get this Scripture to be made good in you, ſo that you may with ſome comfort ſay, through Gods mercy I find that ſtrength coming into me that is here ſpoken of in this Scripture. You ſhould labour when you are under any great affliction (you that are godly) to walk ſo, that others may ſee ſuch a Scripture made good in you; Here is the glorious Power of God that doth ſtrengthen his ſervants

vants to all long-suffering; and that with joyfulneſs. Alas it may be, you do not exerciſe ſo much patience, as a wiſe man or a wiſe woman that hath but natural reaſon. But where is the power of God, the glorious power of God? where is the ſtrengthening with all might, unto all long-ſuffering and patience, and that with joyfulneſs? Its true, the ſpirit of a man may be able to ſuſtain his infirmities, may be able to ſuſtain and keep up his ſpirits, the natural ſpirit of a man; but much more then when the ſpirit is acted with grace and holineſs, and when it is filled with the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt, that's the way of a godly mans getting contentment, the Myſtery of it, its by fetching in ſtrength from Jeſus Chriſt.

Twelfthly, Another Myſtery that there is in it, it is, *That a godly heart enjoys much of God in every thing that it hath, and doth know how to make up all wants in God himſelf*: that is another Myſtery, he hath God in what he hath; that I ſpoke to ſomewhat before, in ſhewing the dew of Gods bleſſing in what he hath, for God is able to let out a great deal of his power in little things, and therefore the miracles that God hath wrought, have been as much in little things as in great; now as God lets out a great deal of his power in working miracles in ſmaller things, ſo he lets out a great deal of goodneſs in mercy, in comforting and rejoycing the heart of his people in little things as well as in great, there may be as much riches in a pearl as in a great deal of lumber; but now this is a diſtinct thing.

Further, A gracious heart as he lives upon Gods dew in a little that he hath, ſo when that little that he hath ſhall be taken from him, what ſhall he do then? Then you will ſay, if a man have nothing, there can be nothing fetcht out of nothing: But if the children of God have their little taken from them, they can make up all their wants in God himſelf. Such a man is a poor man, the plunderers came and took away all that he had, what ſhall he do then when all is gone? But when all is gone, there is an art and skill that godlineſs teaches, to make up all thoſe loſſes in God. Many men that have their houſes burnt go about gathering, and ſo get up by many hands a little; but a godly man knows whither to go to get up all, even in God

himself, so as he shall enjoy the quintessence of the same good and comfort as he had before, for a godly man doth not live so much in himself as he lives in God: This is now a mystery to a carnal heart, I say, a gracious man doth not live so much in himself, as he doth in God, he lives in God continually; if there be any thing cut off from the stream, he knows how to go to the Fountain and makes up all there; God is All in All while he lives; I say it is God that is All in All, *Am not I to thee* (saith *Elkanah* to *Hannah*) *instead of ten children*? So saith God to a gracious heart, Thou wantest this, thy Estate is plundered: Why, Am not I to thee instead of ten houses, and ten shops? I am to thee instead of *All*; yet not only *instead of All*, but come to me and thou shalt have *All again in me*. This indeed is an excellent Art, to be able to draw from God what it had before in the creature? Christian, how didst thou enjoy comfort before? was the creature any other to thee but a conduit, or Pipe that did convey Gods goodness to thee? The Pipe is cut off saith God, Come ye to the Fountain, and drink immediately; though the beams be taken away, yet the Sun remains the same in the Firmament as ever it was: What is that that satisfies God himself? but because he doth enjoy all Fulness in himself? so he comes to have satisfaction in himself: Now if thou enjoyest God to be thy portion, if thy soul can say with the Church, in *Lament.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion saith my soul.* Why shouldest thou not be satisfied and contented as God? God is contented, he is in eternal Contentment, in himself; now if thou hadst that God to be thy portion, why shouldest not thou be contented with himself alone, God is contented with himself alone; if thou hast him thou mayest be contented with him alone, and it may be, that is the reason that thy outward comforts are taken from thee, that God may be all in all to thee: It may be while thou hadst these things here, they did share with God in thy affections, a great part of the stream of thy affection ran that way; now God would have the full stream run to him: As you know it is with a man that hath water comes to his house, and if there be several Pipes, upon which he finds the water comes but scantly into his Wash-house, he will rather stop the other Pipes, that he may have all the

the water come in where he would have it. So here it may be God hath some stream of thy affection that ranne to him then when thou didst enjoy these things; Yea, but a great deal was let out to the Creature, a great deal of thy affections did run waste, Now the Lord would not have the affections of his Children to run waste; he doth not care for other mens affections, but for thine they are precious, and God would not have them to run waste, therefore doth he cut of thy other Pipes that thy heart might run wholly upon him: As if you have Children, because you have servants perhaps do feed them, and give them things, you perceive your servants do steal away the hearts of your Children, you will hardly be able to bear it; you would be ready to turn away such a servant, and when the servants is gone the child is at a great loss, it hath not the Nurse; but the Father or Mother intends by her putting away that the affections of the Child might run the more strongly towards himself or her self; and what loss hath the Child that the affections that ranne in a rough Channel before towards the servant, it runs towards the Mother? So, those affections that run towards the Creature, God would have them run toward himself, that so he may be All in All to thee here in this world. And a gracious heart can indeed tell how to enjoy God to be All in All to him: that is the happiness of Heaven to have God to be All in All. The Saints in Heaven have not Houses and Lands, and Money, and Meat, and Drink, and Cloaths, You will say they do not need them: Why do they not? It is because God is All in All to them immediately. Now while thou livest in this world, thou mayest come to enjoy much of God you may have much of heaven, while we live here in this life we may come to enjoy much of the very life that there is in Heaven, & what is that but the enjoyment of God to be all in all to us? There is one text in the *Revelations* that speaks of the glorious condition of the Church that is like to be even here in this world. *Rev.* 21.22. *And I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it; and the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* They had no need of the Sun or Moon: It speakes of such a glorious condition that

the Church is like to, be in here in this world; this doth not ſpeak of Heaven: and that appears plainly that this is not ſpoken of Heaven, but of a glorious eſtate that the Church ſhall be in here, in this world, for it follows preſently in the 24. and 26 verſes, *And they* (ſpeaking of the Kings of the earth:) *And the Kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it:* Why, the Kings of the earth ſhall not bring their glory and honour into Heaven; but this is ſuch a time when the Kings of the earth ſhall bring in their glory and honour to the Church. and in the 26. verſe, *And they ſhall bring the glory and honour of the Nation into it*; therefore it muſt nees be meant here in this world and not in Heaven. Now if there be ſuch a time here in this world, that God ſhall be All in All, that in no compariſon there ſhall be no ſuch need of Creatures as now there is, then the Saints ſhall labour to live as near that life as poſſible they can, that is to make up all in God. Oh that you would but mind this myſtery, that it may be a reality to the hearts of the Saints in ſuch times as theſe are, they would find this previlage that they get by grace, to be worth thouſands of worlds: hence is that of *Jacob* that I mentioned in another caſe, it is remarkble, and comes on fully here, in *Gen.* 33. that notable ſpeech of *Jacob* when his brother *Eſau* did meet him, ye find in one place, that *Eſau* he refuſed *Jacob's* preſent, in the 8 verſe, when *Jacob* gave his preſent to him, he refuſed it, and told *Jacob* that he had enough; *What meaneſt thou by all this drove which I meet? And he ſaid theſe are to find grace in thy ſight. And* Eſau *ſaid I have enough.* Now in the 11 verſe there *Jacob* urges it ſtill, (and ſaith *Jacob*) *I beſeech thee take it, for I have enough*; now in your books it is the ſame in *Engliſh, I have enough* (ſaith *Eſau*;) *and I have enough* (ſaith *Jacob:*) but in the *Hebrew Jacob's* word is different from *Eſau's*; *Jacob's* word ſignifies, *I have all things*, and yet *Jacob* was poorer than *Eſau*. Oh this ſhould be a ſhame to us, that an *Eſau* ſhould ſay, *I have enough*; but now a Chriſtian ſhould ſay, *I have* not only *enough, but I have all:* how hath he all? Becauſe he hath God that is All; And it was a notable ſpeech of one, *He hath all things, that hath him that hath all things.* Surely thou haſt all things becauſe thou haſt him *for thy portion*, who hath all things: God hath

all

all things in himself, and thou hast God to be thine for thy portion, and in that thou hast all; and this is the Mystery of Contentment. It makes up all wants in God, this is that that the men of the world have little skill in.

Now I have divers other things yet to open in the Mystery of Contentment. I should shew likewise that a godly man not only makes up all in God, but finds enough in himself, to make up all in himself, not from himself, but in himself, and that may seem to be stranger than the other: to make up all in God is somewhat, nay to make all up in himself, not from himself, but in himself, that is, a gracious heart hath so much of God within himself, that he hath enough there to make up all his wants that are without him, *Prov.* 14.14. *A good man shall be satisfied from himself*, from that that is within himself, that is the meaning, a gracious man he hath a bird within his own bosom that makes him melody enough, though he wants musick, *The Kingdom of Heaven is within you:* In *Luke* 17. 21. *He hath a Kingdom within him, and a Kingdom of God:* you see him spoken ill of abroad, he hath a Conscience within him that makes up the want of a name and credit, that is instead of a thousand witnesses.

Thirteenth, *A gracious heart fetches* Contentment *from the Covenant that God hath made with him.* Now this is a way of fetching Contenment that the men of the world know not of: they can fetch Contentment if they have the creature to satisfie them: but to fecth Contentment out of the Covenant of grace, that they have little skill in. I should here have opened two things; First, how to fetch Contentment from the Covenant of grace in general, (But I shall speak to that in the next Sermon and now only a word to the second:) Secondly, how he fetches Contentment from the particular branches of the Covenant, that is, from the particular promises that he hath for the supplying of every particular want: there is no condition that a godly man or woman can be in, but there is some promise or other in the Scripture to help them in that condition. And that is the way of his Contentment, to go out to the promises and fetch from the promise, that which may supply. But that is but a dry business to a carnal heart; but it is the most.

most real thing in the world to a gracious heart; when he finds want of Contentment he repairs to the Promise, and the Covenant; and falls to pleading the Promises that God hath made. As I should have shewed several promises that God hath made, let the affliction be what it will; I will but only mention one that is the saddest affliction of all; in case of the Visitation and the Plague. In *Psal.* 91, now those that cannot have their friends come to them by reason of the Plague, and that cannot have other comforts; in other afflictions they might have their friends and other things to comfort them, but in that they cannot, Psal. 21. 10. *There shall no evil befal thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy dwelling*; Then here is a promise for the Pestilence in the 5 and 6 verses, this is a Scripture to those that are in danger of it. You will say, this is a Promise that the plague shall not come nigh them, but mark these two are joyned, *There shall no evil befal thee*; *neither shall the Plague come nigh thee*: *the evil of it shall not come nigh thee.*

Obj, you will say, *It doth come to many godly men and how can they make use of this Scripture: it is rather a Scripture that may trouble them, because here is a promise that it shall not come nigh them*; *and yet it doth come nigh them as well as others.*

Answ. First, This is the answer I would give, The promises of outward deliverances that were made to the people of God in the time of the Law were to be understood than a great deal more literally, and fulfilled more literally, than in the times of the Gospel. God makes it up otherwise with as much mercy; though God made a Covenant of grace and eternal life in Christ with them, yet I think there was another Covenant too, that God speaks of as a distinct Covenant for outward things to deal with his people by, according to their wayes either in outward prosperity, or outward afflictions, more than now, in a more punctual set way, then in the times of the Gospel; and therefore when the children of *Israel* did but sin against God, they were sure to have publick judgments to come upon them, and if they did well, always publick mercies; the general constant way of God was to deal with the people of the *Jews* according as they did well or ill, (in an ordinay way) with outward judgment and outward mercies: but its not so now in these

times

times of the Gospel; we cannot bring such a certain conclusion, that God will deal so severely with men by such and such afflictions, that he will deal so with them now; and so that they shall have outward prosperity as they had then: therefore that is the first thing for the understanding of this and all other texts of that kind.

The second answer I would give is this; It may be their faith doth not reach to this promise; and God brings many times many outward afflictions, because the faith of his people doth not reach the promise, and that not only in the old Testament, but in the time of the new Testament; *Zechariah* his time may be said to be in the time of the new Testament, when he was struck with dumbness because he did not believe, and that is given to be cause why he was struck with dumbness. But you will say now, Hath Faith warrant to believe deliverance, that it shall be fully delivered? I dare not say so; but it may act upon it, to believe that God will make it good his own way, perhaps you have not done so much, and so upon that this promise is not fulfilled to you.

Thirdly, When God doth make such promises to his people, yet still it must be with this reservation, that God must have liberty to these three things.

1. That notwithstanding his promise, he will have liberty to make use of any thing for your chastizement.

2. That he must have liberty to make use of your estates, or liberties, or lives for the furtherance of his own ends; if it be to a stumbling block to wicked and ungodly men, God must have liberty; though he hath made a promise to you, he will not lose the propriety that he hath in your estates and lives.

3. God must have so much liberty to make use of what you have, for to shew that *his ways are unsearchable, and his judgments past finding out*, God reserves these three things in his hand still.

Object. But you will say, *What good is there in such a Promise that God makes to his people.*

Answ. 1. That thou art under the protection of God more than others. *Obj. But what comfort is that, if it doth befal me?*

Answ.

Anſ. Thou haſt this comfort, that the evil of it ſhall be taken from thee, that is, God will make uſe of this affliction for other ends, yet he will do it ſo as he will make it up to thee ſome othr way. Prehaps you have given your children ſuch a thing, but yet afterwards if you have uſe of that thing, you will come and ſay, I muſt have it: Why father may the child ſay, you gave it me? But ſaith the father I muſt have it, and I will make it up to you ſome other way: Now the child doth not think that the fathers love is ever a whit the leſs to him. So when there is any ſuch promiſe as this is, that God by his promiſe gives thee his protection, and yet for all that ſuch a thing befalls thee, it is but as if the father ſhould ſay, I gave you that indeed, but let me have it and I will make it up to you ſome other way as ſhall be as good; ſaith God let me have your health and liberty, and life, and it ſhall be made up to you, ſome other way.

Secondly, When ever the plague or peſtilence comes to thoſe that are under ſuch a promiſe, it is for ſome ſpecial and notable work, and God requires them to ſearch and examine in a ſpecial manner to find out his meaning; there is ſo much to be learned in the promiſe that God hath made concerning this particular evil, that the people of God they may come to quiet and content their hearts in this affliction. I read in this *Pſalm* that God hath made a promiſe to his people to deliver them from the plague and peſtilence, and yet I do find it to come: it may be I have not made uſe of my faith in this promiſe heretofore; and if God do bring afflictions upon me, yet God will make it up ſome other way: God made a promiſe to deliver me, or at leaſt to deliver me from all the evil of it, now if this thing doth befal me and yet I have a promiſe of God, certainly the evil of it is taken away; this promiſe tells me that if it doth befal me, yet it is for ſome notable end, and becauſe God hath uſe of my life, and intends to fetch about his glory, ſome way that I know not of: And if he will come in a fatherly way of Chaſtiſement, yet I will be ſatisfied in the thing: So a Chriſtian heart by reaſoning out of the Word, come to ſatiaſie his ſoul in the mideſt of ſuch a heavie hand of God and in ſuch a diſtreſed condition as that is. Now carnal hearts they find

find not power in the Word, that healing vertue that there is in the Word; to heal their distracted cares, and the troubles of their spirits: but now, those that are godly when they come to hear the word, they find out, that in the word there's a plaister to all their wounds, and so they come to have ease and contentment, in such conditions as are very grievous and miserable unto others. But now, for other particular promises and more generally for the Covenant of grace, how, and in what mysterious way the Saints do work to fetch Contentment and satisfaction to their souls, we shall refer to the next time.

SERMON IV. *At* Stepney, *August* 17. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

IN the last exercise we spoke of divers things in the mystery of Contentment, and in the close we spoke of two more, but we could not have time to open either of them, I shall open them a little more largely, and then proceed to some few more, and so to other things in the point.

That is the next thing, A Christian heart hath not only contentment in *God*, (and certainly he that hath God must have all he that hath him that hath all, he hath all) *But he is able to make up all his outward wants of Creature comforts from what he finds in himself:* That may seem to be more strange; It is true, perhaps we may convince men, though they do not feel by experience, what it is to make up all in God, yet we may convince them that if they have him that hath all things, then they have all; for there is such a fulness in God, he being the infinite first Being of all things that may make up all their wants.

But here is another thing that is further; I say, A godly man can make up whatsoever he wants without the creature, he can make it up in himself, in *Proverbs*, 14. verse 14. *A good man is satisfied in himself*: as now, if he wants outward comforts; good cheer, feasting; a good Conscience is a continual feast, he can make up the wants of a feast by that peace he hath in his own Conscience: if he wants melody a broad, he hath a bird within him, that sings the most melodious songs that are in the world, and the most delightful. And then, Doth he want honour? he hath his own conscience witnessing for him, that is a thousand witnesses. The Scripture saith in *Luke* 17. verse 21. *Neither shall they say; Lo here, or Lo there; for behold the Kingdom of God is within you*: A Christian then whatsoever he wants he can make it up, for he hath a Kingdom in himself, *the Kingdom of God is within you.* If one that is a King should meet with a great deal of trouble when he is a broad, yet he contents himself with this, I have a Kingdom of mine own: now here it is said, the Kingdom of God is within a man; truly, upon this Scripture of the Kingdom of God being within, those that are learned, if they would but look into that Comment upon the Gospel that we have of a learned man, they shall find a very strange conceit that he hath about this very text, he confesses indeed it is inutterable; and so indeed it is: *The Kingdom of God is within you*; he makes it that there is such a presence of God and Christ within the soul of a man, that when the body dies (he saith) that the soul goes into God and Christ that is within him; the Souls going into God and Christ and enjoying of that communion with God and Christ that is within its self, that is Heaven to it (saith he.) He confesses he is not able to express himself, nor others cannot understand fully what he intends; but certainly for the the present, before death, there is a Kingdom of God within the soul, such a manifestation of God in the soul that is enough to content the heart of any godly man in the World, the Kingdom that he hath now within him, he shall not stay till afterwards, till he goes to Heaven; but certainly there is a Heaven in the soul of a godly man, he hath Heaven already; many times when you go to comfort your friends in their affliction, you will say,

Heaven

Heaven will pay for all; nay [illegible]ay certainly find Heaven pays for all already: there [illegible]eaven within the souls of the Saints; that is a certain truth, [illegible]l shall ever come to Heaven, but that soul that hath Heaven come to it first. When you die, you hope you shall go to Heaven: but if you shall go to Heaven when you die, Heaven shall come to you before you die. Now this is a great Mystery to have the Kingdom of Heaven in the soul, no man can know this but the soul that hath it; that Heaven which is within the soul for the present (I say) it is like the white Stone and the new Name, that none but those that have it can understand it: it is a miserable condition my Brethren to depend upon creatures altogether for our Contentment; you know rich men count it a great happiness, if they need not go to buy things by the penny as others do, they have all things for pleasure or profit upon their own ground, and all their inheritance lyes entire together, they have no body comes within them, but they have all within themselves, there lies their happiness: whereas other poor people are fain to go from one market to another to provide them necessaries, but great men they have Sheep and Beeves, Corn and Cloathing, and all things else of their own within themselves, and herein they place their happiness: But this is the happiness of a Christian, that he hath that within himself that may satisfie him more then all these; That place which we have in the first of *James*, seems to allude to that condition of men that have all their estates within themselves: *James* 1. 4. *But let Patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*: the word there used, signifies to have the whole inheritance to our selves, not a broken inheritance, but that wherein all lies within themselves; as a man that hath not a piece of his estate here, and a piece there, but he hath it all lies together; and the heart being patient under Afflictions, finds it self to be in such an estate as this is, finds whole inheritance to be altogether, and all intire within its self. And now still to shew this by further similitudes; it is with him being filled with good things, just like as it is with many a man that enjoys abundance of comforts at home at his own house, God grants to him a convenient ha-

habitation, a comfortable [illegible]ow, and fine walks and gardens, and hath all things at [illegible] that he would desire? now this man cares not much for [illegible] abroad: other men are fain to go abroad to take the air, but he hath a sweet air at home; and they are fain to go abroad to see freinds, because they have railings and contendings at home; many ill husbands will give this reason (if their wifes made any moan and complaint of their ill husbandry) of their bad husbandry, and will make that their excuse to go abroad, because they can never be quiet at home. Now we account those men most happy that have all at home; those that have close houses that are unsavory, and smell ill, they delight to go in the fresh air; but it is not so with many others, that have those at home; those that have no good cheer at home, they are fain to go abroad to friends; but those that have their Tables furnished, they had as live stay at home: So a carnal man he hath but little Contentment in his own spirit; it is *Austin*'s similitude, saith he, An ill conscience is like a scoulding wife; a man (saith he) that hath an ill conscience he cares not to look into his own soul, but loves to be abroad, and looks into other things, but never looks to himself; but one that hath a good conscience he delights in looking into his own heart, he hath a good conscience within him: And so a carnal heart, because there is nothing but filthiness, a filthy stink in himself, nothing but vileness and baseness within him, and upon this it is that he seeks Contentment elsewhere: and as it is with a vessel that is full of Liquor, if you strike upon it, it will make no great noise; but if it be empty, then it makes a great noise: So it is with the heart: An heart that is full of grace and goodness within, such a one will bear a great many strokes and never make any noise; but an empty heart, if that be struck, that will make a noise; those men and women that are so much complaining, and always whining, it is a sign that there is an emptiness in their hearts; but if their hearts were filled with grace, they would not make such a noise as now they do. As a man that hath his bones filled with Marrow, and veins filled with good bloud, he complains not of cold as others do: so a gracious heart having the Spirit of God within him, and his heart filled with grace, he hath that within

within him that makes him [illegible] Contentment. It is a ſpeech of *Seneca*, Indeed thoſe things that I ſuffer will be incredibly heavy when I cannot bear my ſelf; but now if I be no burden to my ſelf, if I have all quiet within my own heart, then I can bear any thing: many men through their wickedneſs they have burdens without, but the greateſt burden is the wickedneſs of their own hearts, they are not burdened with their ſins in a godly way, that would eaſe their burden; but they have ſtill their wickedneſs in the power of it, and ſo they are burdens to themſelves. The diſtempers of mens heart are mighty burdens to them; many times a godly man hath enough within to content him; vertue it is content with it ſelf for to live well; (It is a ſpeech of *Cicero*, and it is one of his Paradoxes) it finds enough within its own ſphære for the living happily, but how few are acquainted, with this Myſtery? Many think, Oh if I had that that another man hath, how happily and comfortably ſhould I live: Oh but if thou beeſt a Chriſtian, whatſoever thy condition be, yet thou haſt enough within thy ſelf. You will ſay ſuch and ſuch men that have all things, they need not be beholding to any body: you ſhall have many that will labour and take pains when they are young, that they might not be beholding to hers: I love to live of my ſelf, now a Chriſtian may do ſo; not that he doth not live upon God (I mean not ſo) but upon that which he hath of God within himſelf, that he can live upon, al hough he doth not enjoy the comforts that are without himſelf, that is it which I mean, and thoſe that are godly and keep cloſe to God in their communion with him, they underſtand what I mean by this, that a Chriſtian hath ſupply of all his wants within himſelf; and here you may ſee that the ſpirit of a Chriſtian is a precious ſpirit; a godly ſpirit is precious, why? becauſe it hath enough to make him happy within himſelf.

The next thing that the Myſtery of Contentment conſiſts in, is this, *That a gracious heart fetches ſupply of all from the Covenant and ſo comes to have Contentment*: which is a dry thing to a carnal ſpirit; Now there are two things here.

Firſt, he fetches Contentment from the Covenant in general that is, from the great Covenant that God hath made with him

Second-

Secondly, From the particular promiſes that God hath made with him in the Covenant.

Firſt, From the Covenant in general. I'll give you one Scripture for that it, is very remarkable in the 2 of *Sam.* 23. verſe. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things and ſure: for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow.* It is a moſt admirable Scripture of *David*, that yet had not the Covenant of grace open'd ſo fully as we have. But yet mark what *David* ſaith, *Although I find not my houſe ſo*, that is, ſo comfortably every way as I would, although it be not ſo, what hath he to content his ſpirit? ſaith he, *he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant*; this is that that helps all: I am not (may ſome men ſay) thus and thus with God, I do not find God come in ſo fully, or it is not with my houſe and family as I hoped it might be, perhaps there is this or that affliction upon my houſe; ſuppoſe you ſhould have the Plague come into your houſe; and your houſe is not ſafe, and you have not that outward comfort in your houſe as formerly you had; but can you read the Scripture, and ſay, Although my houſe be not ſo bleſt with health as other mens houſes are; *although my houſe be not ſo, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant*, I am one yet in Covenant with God, the Lord hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant: as for theſe things in this world, I ſee they are but momentary, they are not everlaſting. I ſee in a family when all was well but a week ago, now all is down, and the Plague hath ſwept away a great many of them, and the reſt are left in ſadneſs, and mourning: we ſee there is no truſting in the things of this world, yet *the Lord hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant ordered in all things* I find diſorder in my heart, in my family; but *the everlaſting Covenant that is ordered in all things*, yea, *and that is ſure*, Alack! there is no ſureneſs here in theſe things, I can be ſure of nothing here, eſpecially in theſe times, we know that a man can be ſure of little that he hath; who can be ſure of his eſtate? perhaps ſome of you here that have lived well; and comfortably before, and all was well about you, and you thought your mountain was ſtrong, but you ſee within a day or two all taken

ken away from you, so that there is no sureness in the things of this world: But saith he, *the Covenant is sure.* What I venture to the Sea that is not sure, but here is an Assurance Office indeed, here is a great Assurance Office for the Saints, and they are not at charge, but only the exercising of grace, for they may go to this Assurance Office to assure every thing that they venture, either to have the thing it self, or be paid for it. In an assurance Office you cannot be assured to have the very goods come in, that you insured, but if they be lost the Insurers do engage themselves to make it good to you. And this Covenant of grace that God hath made with his people, it is Gods Assurance Office, and the Saints in all their fears may, and ought to go to the Covenant to assure all things to them, to assure their estates, and assure their lives. You will say, how are they sure; their lives and estates go as well as others? But God engages himself to make up all: And then mark what follows *This is all my salvation?* Why *David*, wilt thou not have salvation from thine enemies and outward dangers, from pestilence and plague? The frame of his spirit is quieted, as if he should say, If that salvation comes, well and good, I shall praise God for it; but that that I have in the Covenant, that is my salvation, I look upon that as enough: Yea and then further *That is all my salvation, and all my desire,* Why *David*, is there not something else that thou wouldst have besides this Covenant, No saith he, It is all involved in this. Now surely those men or women must needs live contented lives that have all their desires; now saith the holy man here, that is all my desire, *And though he makes is not to grow.* But for all this Covenant, perhaps you will not prosper in the world as other men do: True, but I amat a point for that, Though God doth not make my house to grow, I have all my desires.

Thus you see how a godly heart finds Contentment in the Covenant. Many of you speak of the Covenant of God, and of the Covenant of grace, but have you found it so effectual to your souls? have you fuckt this sweetness from the Covenant and content to your hearts in your sad condition? It is a special sign of the truth of grace in any soul, that when any affliction doth befal him in a kind of natural way, he doth presently repair

repair to the Covenant; just as a child as soon as ever it is in danger, you shall not need to tell him and say, when you are in danger you must go to your father or mother, nature tells him so: so it is with a gracious heart, as soon as it is in any trouble or affliction, there is a new nature that doth carry him to the Covenant presently, and there it finds ease and rest: and if you find that your hearts do thus work, presently to be running to the Covenant, it is an excellent sign of the truth of grace: that is for the general.

But now for particular promises in the Covenant of grace. A gracious heart looks upon every promise as coming from the root of the great Covenant of grace in Christ. Other men look upon some particular promises, that God will help them in straights and keep them, and the like; but they look not upon the connexion of such particular promises to the root, the Covenant of grace: Now Christians do miss of a great deal of comfort they might have from the particular promises in the Gospel, if they would look upon their connexion to the root, the great Covenant that God hath made with them in Christ. Now I remember, I spoke a little about that, that in outward promises in the time of the Law, they might rest more upon them than we can in the time of the Gospel. I gave you the reason why we that live in the time of the Gospel cannot rest so fully for a literal performance of outward promises that we meet withall in the old Testament, as they might in the time of the Law; for there was a special Covenant that God pleased to call a new Covenant by way of distinction from the other Covenant that is made with us in Christ for eternal life: And so even the Law was given them in a more peculiar way, for an external Covenant of outward blessings in the Land of *Canaan*; and so God did deal with them in a more external Covenant than he doth now with his people. Yet godliness hath the promise of this life; and that which is to come. We may make use of the promises for this life, but yet not so much to rest upon the literal Performance of them as they might; but that God will make them good some way or other, in a spiritual way, if not in an outward way. We must lay no more upon outward promises then this, and therefore if we will lay

more

more we make the Promiſe to bear more than it will bear out. For to give ſome inſtance; To believe fully and confidently, that the Plague ſhall not come nigh ſuch a houſe, (I ſay) it is to lay more upon ſuch a promiſe than it will bear. I opened that promiſe in *Pſal.* 91. Now if I had lived in the time of the Law, perhaps I might have been ſomewhat more confident of the literal performance of the promiſe than I can now in the time of the Goſpel, the promiſe now bears no more then this, That God hath a ſpecial protection over his People, and that he will deliver them from the evil of ſuch an affliction; and if he doth bring ſuch an affliction, it is more than an ordinary Providence. 'Tis ſome ſpecial providence that God hath in it. I had thought to have given you divers promiſes for the Contentment of the heart in the time of affliction: *Iſa.* 43. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Certainly though this promiſe was made in the time of the Law, yet it will be made good to all the Saints now, one way or other, either in the Letter, or ſome other way. For ſo we find it plainly, that promiſe that was made to *Joſhua, I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee, Joſh.* 1. 5. Its applyed to the Chriſtians in the time of the Goſpel. So that here is the way of Faith in bringing Contentment by the Promiſes, that all the Promiſes that ever were made to our fore-fathers, from the beginning of the world, the Saints of God have an intereſt in them, they are their inheritances, and ſo goes on from one generation to another and by that they come to have Contentment becauſe they do inherit all the promiſes made in all the Book of God; So *Heb.* 13. 5. ſhews plainly, that it is our inheritance, and we do not inherit leſs now then they did in *Joſhua*'s times, but we inherit more, for you ſhall find in that place of the *Hebrews*, there is more ſaid then in *Joſhua*; to *Joſhua* God ſaith, *He will not leave him, nor forſake him*; now in that place of the *Hebrews* in the Greek there is five negatives. *I will not, not, not, not, not*: again there is the elegancie of it very much in the Greek, I ſay there is five negatives in that little ſentence; as if God ſhould ſay, *I will not leave you, no, I will not, I will not, I will not*,

with such earnestness five times together; So that we have not only the same promises that they had, but we have them more enlarged and more full, though still not so much in the literal sence, for that indeed is the last part of the promise, In *Isa.* 54. 17. there God made a promise, *that no weapon formed against his people should prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against them in Judgment thou shalt condemn*, (and mark what follows) *this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me saith the Lord*: This is a good promise for Soldiers, though still not to lay too much upon the literal sence: true it holds forth thus much, that Gods protection is in a special manner over Soldiers that are godly, *And every tongue that shall rise against in thee judgment, thou shalt condemn*, & this is against false witness too: Oh you! that your friends never left you any thing, you will say, my friends died and left me not a groat, but I thank God, God hath provided for me; but though thy father or mother died and left thee no heritage, yet thou hast a heritage in the promise, this is their heritage, so that there's no godly man or woman, but is a great Heir. Therefore when thou lookest into the Book of God and findest any promise there, thou mayest make that thine own. Just as an Heir that rides over divers fields and meadows, saith he, this meadow is my heritage, and this Corn-field is my heritage; and then he sees a fair house, and saith he, this fair house is my heritage; and he looks upon them with another manner of eye than a stranger that shall ride over those fields, So a carnal heart reads the promises, and reads them but meerly as stories, not that they have any great interest in them: But a godly man every time he reads the Scriptures (remember this Note when you are reading the Scripture) and there meeteth with a promise, he ought to lay his hand upon it, and say, this is a part of my heritage, its mine, and I am to live upon it, and this will make you to be contented. Here's a mysterious way of Contentment, So in *Psal.* 34. 10. and 37. 6, there's divers other Promises that brings Contentment, In *Isa.* 58. 10, And thus much for the Mystery of Contentment by way of the Covenant.

There is two or three things more that shew how a godly man

man hath Contentment after another kind of way than any Carnal heart in the world hath; its a mysterious way, as thus.

He hath Contentment by realizing the glorious things of Heaven to him, he hath the Kingdom of Heaven as present, and the glory that is to come, by faith he makes it as present. So the Martyrs they had contentment in their sufferings, for said some of them, *Though we have but a hard breakfast, yet we shall have a good dinner, we shall presently be in Heaven: do but shut your eyes* (saith one) *and you shall be in Heaven presently.* 2 Cor. 4. 16. *We faint not* (saith the Apostle,) Why? *Because these light afflictions that are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* They see Heaven before them and that contents them. You Mariners when you can see the Haven before you, though you were mightily troubled before you could see any Land, yet when you come nigh the shore and can see a Land mark, that contents you exceedingly; a godly man, in the midst of the waves and storms that he meets withal, he can see the glory of Heaven before him and so contents himself; one drop of the sweetness of Heaven is enough to take away all the sowr and bitter of all the afflictions in the world. Indeed here we know that one drop of sowr, or one drop of gall will make bitter a great deal of honey, put a spoonful of Suger into a cup of gall or wormwood, that will not sweeten it; but if you put a spoonful of gall into a cup of Suger it will imbitter that; now its otherwise in Heaven, one drop of sweet will sweeten a great deal of sowr affliction, but a great deal of sowr and gall will not imbitter a soul that sees the glory of Heaven that is to come; now a carnal heart hath no contentment but from what he sees before in this world, but a godly heart hath Contentment from that that he sees laid up for him in the highest Heavens.

The last thing that I would name is this, *A godly man hath Contentment by opening and letting out of his heart to God*: other men or women they are discontented, but how do they help themselves by railing, by ill language, such an one crosses them, and they have no way to help themselves but by railing, and by bitter words, and so they ease themselves that way when they

are angry, but a godly man when he is croſt, how doth he eaſe himſelf? he is ſenſible of his croſs as well as you, and he goes to God in prayer, and there opens his heart to God, and lets out his ſorrows and fears, and then can come away with a joyfull countenance; now can you find that you can come away from prayer and not look ſad? As its ſaid in (1 *Sam.* 1. 18.) of *Hannah*, that when ſhe had been at prayer her countenance was no more ſad, there ſhe was comforted; and this is the right way of Contentment. Thus we have done with the myſtery of Contentment. Now if you can put theſe things together that we have ſpoken of, you may ſee fully what an Art Chriſtian Contenment is; *Paul* had need learn it; you ſee Contentment is not ſuch a poor buſineſs as a many make it, to ſay you muſt be content, &c. But it is a great Art and Myſtery of godlineſs to be content in the way of a Chriſtian, and it will appear yet further to be a Myſtery, when we come to the Third Head; and that's to ſhew what thoſe Leſſons are that a gracious heart doth learn when it learns to be contented; *I have learn'd to be contented: Learn'd*, what Leſſons have you learn'd? As now a Schollar that hath great learning and underſtanding in Arts and Sciences, how did he begin it? he began (as we uſe to ſay) his ABC. and then afterwards he came to his Teſtament and Bible, and Accidence, and ſo to his Grammer, and afterwards to his other Books; ſo he learned one thing after another: So a Chriſtian coming to Contentment is as a Scholar in Chriſts School, and there are divers leſſons to teach the ſoul to bring it to this learning: every godly man or woman is a Scholar, it cannot be ſaid of any Chriſtian that he is illiterate, but he is literate; a learned man, a learned woman: now the leſſons that Chriſt teaches, to bring us to Contentment, are theſe;

The firſt great leſſon is, The leſſon of *Self-denyal*; and though it be a great and hard leſſon; as you know a Child at firſt tries its hard; Its that that I remember *Bradford* the Martyr ſaith, *Whoſoever hath not learned the Leſſon of the Croſs, hath not learned his* ABC *in Chriſtianity*. Here Chriſt begins with his Scholars, yet thoſe in the loweſt form muſt begin with this; if you mean to be Chriſtians all, you muſt buckle to this, or you

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can never be Christians: There is none can be a Scholar except he doth learn his *ABC*: so thou must learn the lesson of self-denial or thou canst never come to be a Scholar in Christs School, to be learned in this Mystery of Contentment: That is the first Lesson that Christ teaches any soul: Oh self-denyal that brings contentment, that brings down and softens a mans heart: a thing (you know) that is soft, if you strike upon it, it makes no noise, but if you strike upon a hard thing it makes a noise; so the hearts of men that are full of themselves and hardened with self-love, if they have any stroke they make a noise; but a self-denying Christian yields to Gods hand, and makes no noise; as when you strike upon a Wool-sack it makes no noise, because it yields to the stroke; so a self-denying heart yields to the stroke, and thereby comes to this Contentment. Now in this lesson of self-denyal there are divers things. I will not enter into the doctrine of self-denyal, but only shew you how Christ teaches self-denyal, and how that brings Contentment.

First, *Such a one learns to know that he is nothing*; he comes to this, to be able to say, Well, I see I am nothing in my self: now that man or women which indeed knows that he or she is nothing and hath learned it throughly, will be able to bear any thing. The way to be able to bear any thing, is to know our selves to be nothing in our selves. Saith God to us, *Wilt thou set thine heart upon that which is nothing?* Pro. 23. 5. speaking of riches; why blessed God, dost not thou do so? thou hast set thy heart upon us, and yet we are nothing: God would not have us set our hearts upon riches because they are nothing, and yet God is pleased to set his heart upon us, and yet we are nothing; that is Gods grace, free grace, and therefore it is no great matter what I suffer, for I am as nothing;

Secondly, *I deserve nothing*. I am nothing, and I deserve nothing; suppose I have not this and that that others have, I am sure I deserve nothing except it be Hell; you will answer any of your servants so, that is not content, I marvel what you deserve? or your Children; do you deserve it, that you are so eager upon it? you think to stop their mouths thus; how may easily stop our own mouths; we deserve nothing, and therefore why should we be impatient if we have not what we desire

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if we had deserved any thing, we might have some trouble of spirit; as a man that hath deserved well of the State, or of his friends, and he finds not answerable encouragement, it troubles him mightily, but if he be conscious to himself that he hath deserved nothing, he is content with a repulse.

Thirdly, *I can do nothing, Without me you can do nothing*, saith Christ *John* 15. 5. Why should I stand much upon it to be troubled and be discontented if I have not this or that, when the truth is I can do nothing? if you should come to one that is angry because he hath not such diet as he desires, and is discontented with it, you will answer him, I marvel what you do, what use you are of! Shall one that will sit still and be of no use, yet for all that must he have all his supply that possible he can desire? do but consider of what use you are in the world; if you consider what little need God hath of you, and what little use you are of, you will not be much discontented: if you have learned this Lesson of self-denyal, though God doth cut me short of such and such comforts, yet since that I do but little, why should I have much, This very thought will bring down a mans spirit as much as any thing.

Fourthly, *So vile I am, that I can receive no good neither of my self*; I am not only an empty vessel, but a corrupt and unclean vessel that would spoil any thing that comes into it: So are all our hearts, every one of our hearts is not only empty of good, but are like a musty vessel, that if any good liquor be powred into it, it spoils it.

Fifthly, if God doth cleanse us in some measure, and doth put into us some good Liquor, some grace of his Spirit, yet *We can make use of nothing, neither can we have it, if God doth but withdraw himself*: If God doth but leave us one moment, after he hath bestowed upon us the greatest gifts, and whatsoever abilities we can desire, if God should say, I will give you them, now go and trade, now I have given you these and these abilities, we cannot stir one foot further neither if God doth but leave us. Doth God give us gifts and parts? Then let us fear and tremble lest God should leave us to our selves, for then how foully should we abuse those gifts and parts? You think other men and women have memorys, and gifts and parts, and you would fain

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have them. But suppose God should give you these, and then leave you, you would utterly spoil them.

Sixthly, *We are worse then nothing.* For by sin we come to be a great deal worse than nothing; sin makes us more vile than nothing, sin makes us contrary to all good: now it is a great deal worse to have a contrariety to all that is good, than meerly to have an emptiness of all that is good; we are not only empty pitchers in respect of good, but we are like pitchers filled with poyson, and it is not much for such as we are, to be cut short of outward comforts.

In the seventh place, *if we perish, there will be no loss of us.* If God should annihilate me, what loss would there be of me? God can raise up another in my place, to do him other manner of service then I have done. Now put but these seven things together and then hath Christ taught you self-denyal: I may call these the several words in our Lesson of Self-denyal; Christ teaches the soul this, so that as in the presence of God upon a real sight of it self it can say, Lord I am nothing, Lord I deserve nothing Lord I can do nothing, I can receive nothing, I can make use of nothing, I am worse then nothing, and if I come to nothing and perish there will be no loss at all of me, and therefore what great matter is it for me to be cut short here? A man that is little in his own eyes, such a man or woman will account every affliction to be little and every mercy to be great: *Saul*, there was a time (the Scripture saith) that he was little in his own eyes, and then his afflictions were but little to him: when some would not have had him to be King, but spake contemptuously of him, he held his peace, but when *Saul* began to be big in his own eyes, then the affliction began to be great upon him. *There was never any such contented man or woman as this self-denying man or woman:* There was never any denyed himself so much as Jesus Christ did, *he gave his cheek to the smiters, he opened not his mouth, he was as a lamb when he was led to the slaughter*, he made no noise in the street; Oh he denyed himself above all, and was willing to empty himself; and so he was the most contented that ever any was in the world, and the neerer we come to learn to deny our selves as Christ did, the more contented shall we be, and by knowing much of our own vileness, we come to

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learn to justifie God, whatever the Lord shall lay upon us, yet righteous is the Lord, for he hath to deal with a most wretched creature. A discontented heart he is troubled because he hath no more comfort; but one that is a self-denying man he rather wonders that he hath so much as he hath. Oh saith one, I have but a little: I but saith he that hath learned this lesson of self-denyal, I rather wonder that God bestows upon me the liberty of breathing in the air, knowing how vile I am, and knowing how much sin the Lord doth see in me: and that is the way of contentment by learning self-denial.

Eightly, There is a further thing in self denial which brings contentment; *Because thereby the soul comes to rejoyce and take satisfaction in all Gods way*, (I beseech you observe this) If a man be selfish and have self love prevail in his heart, those things that suits with his own ends he will be glad of them; but a godly man that hath denyed himself, he will suit with, and be glad of all things that shall suit with Gods ends: Saith a gracious heart, Gods ends are my ends; and I have denyed mine one ends, and so he comes to find contentment in all Gods ends and ways, and his comforts are multiplied, whereas the comfort of other men are single: it is but very rare that Gods ways shall sute with a mans particular ends, but always Gods ways suit with his own ends; now if you will only have contentment when Gods ways sute with your own ends, you can have it but now and then, but a self-denying man denys his own ends and only looks at the ends of God, and therein is contented: When a man is selfish he cannot but have a great deal of trouble and vexation, for if I regard my self, my ends are so narrow that I shall have a hundred things will come and justle mé, and I cannot have room in those narrow ends of mine own; as you know in the City what a deal of stir there is in the narrow-streets; as *Thames*-street being so narrow they justle and wrangle and fight one with another because the place is so narrow, but now in the broad streets they can go quietly; so men that are selfish, they meet and so justle one with another, one man is for self in one thing, and another man is for self in another thing, and so they make a great deal of stir; but those whose hearts are inlarged and make publick things their ends, and can deny themselves

themselves, they can walk at breadth and never justle one with another so as the other do. The Lesson of self-denyal is the first Lesson that Jesus Christ doth learn men in the seeking of Contentment.

The second Lesson is, *The vanity of the Creature*: That is the second Lesson in Christs School that he teaches those that he would make Scholars in this Art, The vanity of the Creature, That whatsoever there is in the Creature, hath an emptiness in it, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*; that is the Lesson that the Wise man learned, that the creature in its self can do us neither good nor hurt but it is all but as a wind, there is nothing in the creature that is sutable to a gracious heart to feed upon for the good and happiness of it: My Brethren, the reason why you have not Contentment in the things of the world, it is not because you have not enough of them, this is not the reason, but the reason is, because they are not things proportionable to that immortal soul of yours that is capable of God Himself; many men think when they are troubled and have not Contentment, that it is because they have but a little in the world, and if they had more, then they should be content: That, were just thus, Suppose a man is an hungry, and to satisfie his craving stomach he should gape and hold open his mouth, to take in the wind, and then should think the reason why he is not satisfied, is because he hath not enough of the wind, ; no, the reason is, because the thing is not sutable to a craving stomach, ; truly there is the same madness in the world; the wind that a man takes in by gaping will as soon satisfie a craving stomach which is ready to famish, as all the comforts in the world can satisfie a soul that knows what true happiness means. You would be happy, and you seek after such and such comforts in the creature; well, have you got them? do you find your heart satisfied as having that happiness that is sutable to you? No, no, it is not here, but you think it is because you want such and such things: Oh poor deluded man! It is not because you have not enough of it, but because it is not the thing that is proportionable to that immortal soul that God hath given you. *Why do you lay out your money for that which is not bread* (Isa. 55, 2.) *and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* you are mad-people, you seek to satisfie

your ſtomachs with that that is not bread, you follow the wind, you will never have Contentment, all the creatures in the world ſay, Contentment is not in us; riches ſaith Contettment is not in me; pleaſure ſaith Contentment is not in me; if you look for Contentment in the creature you will fail; No, Contentment is higher: when thou comeſt into the School of Chriſt, Chriſt teaches thee that there is a vanity in all things in the world, and the ſoul that by coming into the School of Chriſt, and by underſtanding the glorious myſteries of the Goſpel comes to ſee the vanity of all things in the world, that is the ſoul that comes to true Contentment. I could tell you of abundance of ſentences from Heathens that ſhew the vanity of all things in the world, and yet they did not learn the vanity of the creature in the right School. But now when a ſoul comes into the School of Jeſus Chriſt, and there comes to ſee a vanity in all things in the world, than ſuch a ſoul comes to have Contentment. If you ſeek contentment elſewhere, you do like the unclean ſpirit, ſeek for reſt but find none.

A Third Leſſon that Chriſt teaches a Chriſtian when he comes into his School is this: *He learns him to underſtand what that One thing is that is neceſſary, which he never came to underſtand before:* you know what he ſaith to *Martha*, O Martha, *thou cumbreſt thy ſelf about many things, but there is one thing neceſſary.* The ſoul before ſought after this and the other thing, but now ſaith the ſoul, I ſee really that it is not neceſſary that I ſhould be rich, but it is neceſſary that I ſhould make up my peace with God; it is not neceſſary that I ſhould live a pleaſurable life in this world, but it is abſolutely neceſſary that I ſhould have pardon of my ſin; it is not neceſſary that I ſhould have honor and preferment, but it is neceſſary that I ſhould have God to be my portion and have my part in Jeſus Chriſt; it is neceſſary that my ſoul ſhould be ſaved in the day of Jeſus Chriſt: the other things are pretty fine things indeed, and I ſhould be glad if God would give them me, a fine habitation, and comings in, and cloaths, and promotion for my wife and children, theſe are comfortable things, but theſe are not the neceſſary things, I may have theſe and yet periſh for ever, but the other is abſolutely neceſſary; no matter though I be poor, ſo be it I may have that that is abſolutely

lutely neceſſary; thus Chriſt inſtructs the ſoul. There is many of you have had ſome thoughts about this, that it is indeed neceſſary for you to provide for your ſoul: but when you come into Chriſts School, there Chriſt cauſes the fear of eternity to fall upon you, and there he cauſes ſuch a real ſight of the great things of eternity and the abſolute neceſſity of thoſe things, that poſſeſſes your hearts with fear; and that takes you off from all other things in the world. Now I ſhould have ſhewn you how that will bring Contentment to the ſoul when it comes to be inſtructed in the thing that is abſolutely neceſſary, but thus much for this time.

SERMON V. *At* Stepney, *Auguſt* 24. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever State I am, therewith to be content.

I Mentioned three Leſſons the laſt time, that Chriſt teaches thoſe Scholars that come into his School whereby they might come to get Contentment.

Firſt, the Leſſon of ſelf-denyal.

Secondly, The Leſſons of the vanity of the creature.

Thirdly, the right underſtanding of that one thing that is Neceſſary. A little to enlarge this one, and ſo to proceed to others.

It is ſaid of *Pompey*, that when he was to carry Corn to *Rome* in time of dearth, he was in a greal deal of danger by ſtorms at Sea, *but* (ſaith he) *We muſt go on it is neceſſary that* Rome *ſhould be relieved, but is is not neceſſary that we ſhould live* So it would be certainly when the ſoul is once taken up with the things that are of abſolute neceſſity, it will not be much

troubled about other things, What are the things that do disquiet us here, but some by-matters in this world? and it is because our hearts are not taken up with that *one* absolute *necessary thing*, Who are the men that are most discontented, but idle persons, persons that have nothing to take up their minds, every little thing disquiets and contents them, But now a man that hath business of great weight and consequence, if all things go well with his great business that is in his head, he is less sensible of meaner things in the family; but now a man that lies at home and hath nothing to do, he finds fault with every thing; So it is with the heart; when the heart of a man hath nothing to do but be busie about creature comforts, every little thing troubles him; but now when the heart is taken up with the weighty things of Eternity, the great things of eternal life, the heart being taken up with them; these things that are here below, that did disquiet it before, are things now of no consideration with him, in comparison to the other, so as how things fall out here is not much regarded with him, if the *One thing that is necessary be provided for.*

The fourth Lesson that the soul is instructed in to come to this knowledge in the Art of Contentment, is this: *The soul comes to understand in what relation it stands in here to the world*: by that I mean thus *God comes to instruct the soul effectually through Christ by his Spirit, upon what terms it lives here in the world, in what relation it is that it doth stand:* as thus, While I live in the world my condition is to be but a pilgrim, a stranger, a traveller and a soldier: Now the right understanding of this, and being taught this, not only by rote, that I can speak the words over, but when I come indeed to have my soul possest with the consideration of this Truth, That God hath set me in this world, not as in my home, but as a meer stranger & a pilgrim that I am travelling here to another home, & that I am here a soldier in my warfare; it is a mighty help to Contentment in whatsoever befals one: as now to instance of all these conditions, When a man is at home, if he hath not things according to his desire he will be finding fault, and is not contented; but if a man travels abroad, perhaps he meets not with conveniences as he desires, the servants in the house are not at his beck, or are not so

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diligent as his own ſervants were, and his diet is not as at home, and his bed not as at home, yet this very thought may moderate a mans ſpirit, I am a Traveller and I muſt not be finding fault, I am but in another mans houſe, and it were not manners for one to find fault when he is abroad in another mans family; though things be not ſo as in my own family; If a man meets with ill weather he muſt be content; It is Travellers fare (we uſe to ſay) both fare weather and foul weather, this is the common Travellers fare, and we muſt be content with it; but if a man were at home and it ſhould drop down in his houſe, he would account it an ill thing, an affliction to him, and he cannot bear it: but when he is travelling abroad though he meet with rain and ſtorms he is not ſo much troubled: When you are abroad at Sea, though you have not thoſe many things that you have at home, you are not troubled at it, you are contented; Why? you are abroad at Sea, you are not troubled at ſtorms that do ariſe, and though you have many things otherwiſe than you would have them at home, but ſtill you are quieted with that, you are at Sea. Marriners when they are at Sea they care not what cloaths they have then, though they be pitched and tarr'd and put a clout about their necks, and any mean cloaths; but they think when they come home, then they ſhall have their fine ſilk-ſtockings, and brave ſutes, and laced bands and ſuch things, and ſhall be very fine; and ſo they are contented abroad upon that thought, that it ſhall be otherwiſe with them when they come home, and though they have nothing but ſalt meat, and a little hard fare, yet when they come to their houſes then they ſhall have any thing; Thus it ſhould be with us in this world: the truth is we are all in this world but as Sea-faring men, toſt up and down on the waves of the Sea of this world, and our Haven is Heaven, and we are here travelling, but our home it is another world, that long home. Indeed ſome men have better accomodations than others have in travelling: it is true, it is a great mercy of God to us in *England* in that we can travel with ſuch delight and accomodations more then they can in other Countries; and through Gods mercy we have as great accomodation in our travelling to Heaven in *England* as any place under Heaven hath, but yet though

though we do meetwith travellers fare ſometimes, yet itſhould not be grievous to us; The Scripture tells us plainly that we muſt behave our ſelves here but as pilgrims and ſtrangers. In *1 Peter 2. 11. Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as ſtrangers, and pilgrims abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul:* conſider what your condition is, you are pilgrims and ſtrangers, do not think to ſatisfie your ſelves here. A man when he comes into an Inn, if there be a fair cupboard of late, he is not troubledthat it it not his own, Why? becauſe he is going away; ſo let us not be troubled when we ſee other men have great eſtates, but we have not, Why? we are going away into another Country, you are lodging here but as it were for a night, if you ſhould live an hundred years in compariſon of eternitie, it is not ſo much as a night, it is but as if you were travelling, and were come into an Inn: And were not this a madneſs for a man to be diſcontented becauſe he hath not what he ſees there, ſeeing it may be he is to go away again within half a quarter of an hour? So you find it in *David*, this was the argument that brought off *Davids* heart from the things of this world and ſet him upon other manner of things: *Pſal. 119. 19. I am a ſtranger in the earth, hide not thy Commandments from me: I am a ſtranger in the earth*, (what then?) *then Lord let me have the knowledge of thy Commandments*, and its ſufficient; as for the things of the earth, I ſtand not upon them whether I have much or little, but *hide not thy Commandments from me*, Lord let me know the rule that I ſhould guide my life by.

Again, We are not only Travellers but Soldiers, this is the condition of the life in which we are here in this world, and therefore we are to behave our ſelves accordingly. So the Apoſtle makes uſe of this argument in writing unto *Timothy*, *2 Tim. 2. 3. Thou therefore endure hardneſs as a good Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt.* The very thought of the condition of a man that is a Soldier, doth ſtill his diſquiet of heart: when he is abroad, he hath not that accomodation in his quarters as he hath in his own family; perhaps a man that hath his bedwarm and curtains drawn about him, and all his accomodations in his chamber; now perhaps ſometimes he muſt be put to lye upon ſtraw, and he thinketh with himſelf, I am a Soldier and it is ſutable to my condition

dition: he must have his bed warm'd at home, but he must lie abroad in the fields when he is a Soldier; and the very thought of this condition in which he stands quiets him in all things, yea, and he goes rejoycing, to think, this is but sutable to my condition in which God hath put me: so it should be with us in respect of this world. Now, would it not be an unseemly thing to see a Soldier go whining up and down with the finger in his eye, and complaining that he hath not hot meat every meal, and his bed warm'd as he had at home; Now Christians they know that they are in their warfare, they are here in this world fighting and combating with the enemies of their souls and eternal condition, and they must be willing to endure hardness here. The right understanding of this, that God hath put them into such a condition, it is that that will content them, especially when they consider that they are certain of the victory, and that ere long they shall triumph with Jesus Christ, and then all their sorrows shall be done away, and their tears wiped from their eyes. A Soldier is content to endure hardness, though he knows none that he shall have the victory? but a Christian knows himself to be a Soldier, and knows that he shall conquer and triumph with Jesus Christ to all eternity. And thats the Fourth Lesson that Christ doth teach the soul when he brings it into his School, to learn the Art of Contentment, he makes him understand throughly the relation in which he hath placed him in, in this world.

The Fifth Lesson that Christ teaches, it is this, *He teaches us wherein consists any good that is to be enjoyed in any creature in the world.* Its true, before it hath been taught that there is a vanity in the Creature; that is, take the Creature considered in it self, but yet though there be a vanity in the Creature in its self, in respect of satisfying the soul for its portion, yet there is some goodness in the Creature; though there be a vanity there is some desireableness: But wherein doth that consist? it consists not in the nature of the Creature it self, for that is nothing but vanity; but it consists in the reference it hath to the first being of all things. This is a Lesson that Christ teaches, if there be any good in an estate, or in any comfort in this world, it is not so much that pleases my sense, that it is sutable to my

my body, but the reference it hath to God the First Being, that by these creatures there should be somewhat of Gods goodness conveyed to me, and I may have sanctified use of the creature to draw me neerer to God, and that I enjoy more of God, and be made more serviceable for the glory of God in the place where God hath set me here's the good of the Creature; Oh were we but instructed in this Lesson, did we but understand, and throughly believe this to be a truth, that there is no creature in all the world hath any goodness in it, any further than it hath reference to the first infinite Supream Good of all, that so far as I can enjoy God in it, so far it is good to me, and so far as I do not enjoy God in it, so far there is no goodness in any thing that I have in the creature, how easie were it then for one to be contented? As thus, suppose a man had a great estate but a few years ago, and now its all gone, I would but appeal to this man, When you had your estate wherein did you count the good of that estate to consist? a carnal heart would say, any body might know that; that it brought me in so much a year, and that I could fare of the best, and be a man of repute in the place where I live, and men would regard what I said, I might be cloathed as I would; and lay up portions for my children, in this consisted the good of my estate: this man now never came into the School of Christ to know wherein the good of an estate did consist, no marvel if he be disquieted when he hath lost his estate: But now a Christian that hath been in the School of Christ, and hath been instructed in the Art of Contentment, when such an one hath an estate he thinks, in that I have an estate above my brethren, in this consists the good of it to me, in that I have an opportunity to serve God the better, and I enjoy a great deal of Gods mercy to my Soul conveyed to me through the creature, and hereby I am enabled to do a great deal of good, and therein I account the good of my estate. Now God hath taken this away from me; now if God would be pleased to make up the enjoyment of himself another way; that is, will call me to honor him by suffering, and if I may do God as much Service now in my way of suffering, that is to shew forth the Grace of his Spirit in the way of my sufferings as I did in the way of prosperity; I have

have as much of God as I had before; if I may be led to God in my low condition, as much as I was in my prosperous condition, I have as much Comfort and Contentment as I had before.

Object. But you will say, *Its true, If I could honour God in my low estate as much as in my prosperous estate, then it were somewhat; but how can that be?*

Answ. You must know, the special honor that God hath from his Creatures in this world, it is, The manifestation of the Graces of his Spirit; It's true, God hath a great deal of honor when a man is in a publick place, and so he is able to do a great deal of good, To countenance Godliness, and discountenance Sin; but the main thing is, *In shewing forth the vertues of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous Light.* Now if I can say, That through Gods mercy in my affliction I find the Graces of Gods Spirit working as strongly in me as ever they did when I had my estate, I am where I was; yea, I am fully in as good a condition, for I have that good now that I had in my prosperous estate, for I accounted the good of it, but in my enjoyment of God, and honouring of God, and now God hath blest the want of it to stir up the Graces of his Spirit in my Soul, and this is the work that now God calls me to; and I must account God is most honoured when I do the work that he calls me to; He set me a work in my prosperous estate at that time to honour him in that condition; and now he sets me a-work at this time, to honour him in this condition: Now God is most honoured, when I can turn from one condition to another, according as he calls me to it: Would you account your selves to be honoured by your servants, when you set them about a work that hath some excellencie, and they will go on, and on, and you cannot get them off from it? Now let the work be never so good, yet if you will call them off to another work, you do expect that they should manifest so much respect to you, as to be content to come off from that, though they be set about a meaner work, if it be more futable to your ends. So, you were in a prosperous estate, and there God called you to some service that you took some pleasure in; but suppose God saith, I will use you in a suffering condition, and I will have you to honour me in that way; now here's the honouring

of God that you can turn this way or that way, as God calls you to it; thus now you having learned this, That the good of the Creature consists in the enjoyment of God in it, and the honouring of God by it, you can be content, because you have the same good that you had before. And that's the Fifth Lesson.

The Sixth Lesson that Christ doth teach the Soul that he brings into this School, is this; *He doth instruct such a man or woman in the knowledge of their own hearts*: you must learn this or you will never learn Contentment; you must learn to know your own hearts well, to be good students of your own hearts, you cannot all be Scholars in the Arts and Sciences in the world; but you may all be students in your own hearts; you cannot read in the Book (many of you) but God expects every day you should turn over a leaf in your own hearts; you will never come to get any skill in this Mystery, except you study the Book of your own hearts: Marriners, they have their Books that they study, those that will be Navigators; and Scholars they have their Books; those that study Logick, they have their Books accoring to that; and those that would study Rethorick and Philosophy have their Books according to that; and those that study Divinity, they have their Books whereby they come to be helped in the Study of Divinity: but a Christian (next to the Book of God) is to look into the Book of his own heart, and to read over that, and this will help you to Contentment these three ways.

1. By the studying of thy heart, thou wilt come presently to *discover wherein thy discontent lies*; when thou art discontented thou wilt find out the root of any discontentment if thou doest study thy heart well: many men and women they are discontented, and the truth is, they know not wherefore, they think that and the other thing is the cause, but a man or woman that knows their own heart, they will find out presently where the root of their discontent lies, that it lies in such a corruption, and disteroper of my heart, that now through Gods mercy I have found out; it is in this case as it is with a little Child that is very froward in the house, if a stranger comes in he doth not know what the matter is, perhaps the stranger will give the Child

Child a Rattle, or a Nut, or such a thing to quiet it, but when the Nurse comes she knows the temper and disposition of the Child, and therefore knows best how to quiet it: So it is here just thus for all the world, when we are strangers with our own hearts, we are mightily discontented, and know not how to quiet our selves, because we know not wherein the disquiet lieth: And indeed when we are strangers to our own hearts we cannot tell how to quiet our selves; but if we be very well versed in our own hearts, when any thing falls out so as to disquiet us, we find out the cause of it presently, and so quickly come to be quiet. So a man that hath a Watch, and he understands the use of every Wheel and Pin, if it goes amiss he will presently find out the cause of it: but one that hath no skill in a Watch, when it goes amiss he knows not what the matter is, and therefore cannot mend it. So indeed our hearts are as a Watch, and there are many wheels, and windings and turnings there, and we should labour to know our hearts well, that when they are out of tune, we may know what the matter is.

2. This knowledge of our hearts will help us to Contentment, because by this *We shall come to know what is most suitable to our condition.* As thus, A man that knows not his own heart he thinks not what need he hath of affliction, and upon that he is disquieted; but that man or woman that hath studied their own hearts, when God comes with afflictions upon them, they can say, I would not for any thing in the world have been without this affliction, God hath so suted this affliction to my condition, and hath come in such a way, that if this affliction had not come, I am afraid I should have fallen into sin: A poor ignorant man that takes Physick, the Physick works and he thinks it will kill him, because he knows not the ill humors that are in his body, and therefore he understands not how suitable the Physick is to him; but a Physitian takes a Purge, and it makes him extreamly sick, saith the Physitian, I like this the better, it doth but work upon the humor that I know is the cause of my Disease, and upon that such a man that hath knowledge and understanding of his Body, and the cause of his distemper, he is not troubled or disquieted: So would we be, if we did but

know the distempers of our own hearts; carnal men and women they know not their own spirits, and therefore they fling and vex upon every affliction that doth befal them, they know not what distempers are in their hearts, that may be healed by their afflictions, if it please God to give them a sanctified use of them.

3. By knowing thier own hearts, *they know what they are able to manage*, and by this means they come to be content; the Lord (perhaps) takes away many comforts from them that they had before, or denies them some things that they hoped to have got, now they by knowing their hearts, know this, That they were not able to manage such an estate, and they were not able to manage such prosperity, God saw it, and (saith a poor soul) I am in some measure convinc'd by looking into mine own heart, that I was not able to manage such a condition. A man desires greedily to gripe more perhaps than he is able to manage, and so undoes himself: As Country-men do observe, that if they do over-stock their Land, it will quickly spoyl them; and so a wise Husband-man that knows how much his ground will bear, he is not troubled that he hath not so much stock as others, why? because he knows he hath not ground enough for so great a stock, and that quiets him: So many men and women that know not their own hearts, they would fain have a prosperous estate as others have, but if they knew their own hearts, they would know that they were not able to manage it. If one of your little Children of three or four years old, should be crying for the coat of her that is twelve or fourteen years old, and say, Why may not I have a Coat as long as my Sister? If she had, it would soon trip up her heels, and break her Face; but when the Child comes to understanding she is not discontented because her coat is not so long as her Sisters, but saith, my Coat is fit for me, and therein takes content: So if we come to understanding in the School of Christ, we will not cry, Why have not I such an estate as others have? the Lord sees that I am not able to manage it, and I see it my self by the knowing of mine own heart. You shall have Children, if they see but a Knife they will cry for it, because they know not their strength, and that they are not able to manage it, but you know

know they are not able to manage it, and therefore you will not give it them, and when they come to so much understanding as to know that they are not able to manage it, they will not cry for it; so we would not cry for such and such things, if we knew that we were not able to manage them: when you vex and fret for what you have not, I may say to you as Christ saith, *you know not of what spirit you are of.* It was a speech of *Oecolampadius* to *Pirillus*, saith he (when they were speaking about this extream poverty,) *Not so poor though I have been very poor, yet I would be poorer, I could be willing to be poorer than I am,* for the truth is (as if he should say) the Lord knew that that was more sutable to me, and I knew that my own heart was such, that a poor condition was more sutable to me then a rich so certainly would we say, if we know our own hearts, that such and such a condition is better for me then if it had been otherwise.

The seventh Lesson, *Is the burden of a prosperous estate.* Such a one that comes into Christ's School to be instructed in this Art, never comes to attain to any great skill in this Art, till he comes to understand the burden that is in a prosperous estate.

Object. You will say, *What burden is there in a prosperous estate?*

Answ. Yes certainly a great burden, and there needs a great strength to bear it: as men have need of strong brains that can bear strong Wine, so they have need of strong Spirits that are able to bear prosperous conditions, and not to do themselves hurt; there's a fourfold burden in a prosperous estate. Many men and women look at the shine and glittering of prosperity, but they little think of the burden, but there's a fourfold burden.

1. There's *A burden of trouble.* A Rose hath its prickles; and so the Scripture saith, *They that will be rich, pierceth himself through with many sorrows, 1. Tim. 6. 10.* If a mans heart be set upon it that he must be rich, and he will be rich; such a man will pierce himself through with many sorrows, he looks upon the delight and glory of riches that appears outwardly, but he considers not what piercing sorrows he may meet with-

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all in them: The consideration of the trouble in a prosperous condition I have divers times thought of, and I cannot tell by what similitude to express it better, than by travelling in some Champion Country, where round about is very fair and sandy ground, and you see there a Town a great way off in a bottom, and you think, O how bravely is that Town seated! But when you come and ride into the Town, you shall ride through a dirty lane, and through a company of fearfull dirty holes, and you could not see the dirty lane and holes when you were two or three miles off: so sometimes we look upon the prosperity of men, and think such a man lives bravely and comfortably, but if we did but know what troubles he meets withal in his family, in his estate, in his dealings with men, we would not think his condition so happy. One may have a very fine new shooe, but no body knows where it pinches him, but he that hath it on: so you think such and such men are happy, but they may have many troubles that you little think of.

2. *There is a burden of Danger in it.* Men that are in a prosperous condition they are in a great deal of danger: you see sometimes in the evening when you light up your Candles, the Moths and the Gnats will be flying up and down in the Candle, but they scorch their wings, and there they fall down dead; so there is a great deal of danger in a prosperous estate, those men that are set upon a pinacle on high, these men they are in greater danger than other men are. Honey we know doth invite Bees and Wasps unto it; and so the sweet of prosperity doth invite the Devil and Temptation. Men that are in a prosperous estate, are subject to many temptations that other men are not subject to. The Scripture calls the Devil *Beelzebub*, that is, the God of Flies; and so *Beelzebub* comes where the honey of prosperity is: They are in very great danger of temptations that are in a prosperous condition. The dangers of men that are in a prosperous estate, that have more than others, should be considered of by those that are lower; think with thy self, Though they be above me, yet they are in more danger then I am; the tall Trees are more shattered a great deal then low shrubs: so you know the Ship that hath all the sails up, the top sail and all in a storm, this is in more danger than that that hath all the sails drawn

drawn in: And so men that have their top-gallant, and all up and brave, they are more like to be drowned, drowned in perdition than other men are; and therefore you know what the Scripture saith, how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: such a text should make poor people to be contented with their estates. We have a notable example for that in the Children of *Kohath*, you shall find that they were in a more excellent estate than the other of the *Levites*, but they were in more danger than the other, and more trouble.

First, That the Children of *Kohath* were in a higher condition than other of the *Levites*, that I'll shew you out of the *4th.* of *Numb.* 4. ver. there you shall find what their condition was *This shall be the service of the sons of* Kohath *in the Tabernacle of the Congregation about the most holy things.* Mark the *Levites* were exercised about *holy things*; but the sons of *Kohath*, their service was about the *most holy things of all*: and you shall find in the 21 of *Joshua* vers. 10. That God did honor the sons of *Kohath* in a more special manner than he did honor the other *Levites*, which honor the Children of *Aaron* (being of the families of the *Koharites*, who were of the Children of *Levi*) had, for theirs was the first Lot, and they were preferr'd before the other families of *Levi*, those that were imployed in the most honorable imployment, they had the most honorable Lot, the first Lot fell to them: Thus you see God honoured the Children of the *Kohathites*. But (might other *Levites* say) how hath God preferr'd this family before us? They were honoured more than the other were: But now mark their burden that comes with their honor, and that I will shew you out of two Scriptures, first is, *Num.* 7. 6, 7, 8, 9. *And* Moses *took the Wagons and Oxen, and gave them unto the* Levites; *Two Wagons and four Oxen he gave unto the sons of of* Gershom, *according to their service, and four Wagons and eight Oxen he gave unto the sons of* Merari, *according unto their service, under the hand of* Ithamar *the son of* Aaron *the Priest.* But saith he (vers. 7.) *Unto the sons of* Kohath *he gave none; because the service of the sanctuary that belonged unto them, was, That they should bear upon their shoulders.* Mark, the other *Levites* had Oxen and Wagons given unto them, to ease them of their service; but (saith he) to the sons of *Kohath* he gave none

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but they ſhould bear their ſervice upon their ſhoulders; and that's the reaſon why God was ſo diſpleaſed, becauſe that they would have more eaſe in God's ſervice than God would have them: for whereas they ſhould carry it upon their ſhoulders, they would carry it upon a cart; Mark here, you ſee the firſt burden that they had, beyond what the other *Levites* had. And thoſe that are under them think not of their burdens that they are to carry upon their ſhoulders, when as others have means to eaſe them; and many times thoſe that are employed in the Miniſtry or Magiſtracy, that ſit at the Stern to order the great Affairs of the Commonwealth and State, you think they live bravely: They lie awake when you are aſleep; if you knew the burden that lies upon their Spirits, you would think that your labour and burden were very little in compariſon of theirs.

2. There's another burden of danger more then the reſt, and that you ſhall find in *Numb.* 4. 17. *And the Lord ſpake unto* Moſes *and unto* Aaron *ſaying, Cut ye not off the Tribe of the Families of the* Kohathites *from among the* Levites, *but thus do unto them that they may live and not die: When they approach unto the moſt holy things*, Aaron *and his ſons ſhall go in, and appoint them every one to his ſervice and to his burden; but they ſhall not go in to ſee when the holy things are covered, leſt they die.* Mark this text, ſaith the Lord to *Moſes* and *Aaron, Cut ye not off the Tribe of the family of the* Kohathites *from among the* Levites. *Cut them not off*, why? what had they done? had they done any thing amiſs? No, they had not done any thing that provoked God: but the meaning is this; Take a great care of the family of the *Kohathites* to inſtruct them in their duty that they were to do; *for* (ſaith God) *they are in a great deal of danger, being to ſerve in the moſt holy things*: If they ſhould go in to ſee the holy things more than God would have them, it is as much as their lives are worth, and therefore if you ſhould but neglect them, and not inform them throughly in their duty, they would be undone: Saith God, *they are to adminiſter in the moſt holy things*; and if they ſhould but dare to preſume to do any thing otherwiſe than God would have them about thoſe ſervices, it would coſt them their lives; and

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therefore be not you careless of them, for if you neglect them you will be a means of cutting them off. Thus you see the danger that the family of the *Kohathites* were in; they were prefer'd before others, but they were in more danger. So you think there are such men in a parish that bear the sway, and are imployed in publick service, and they carry all before them; but you consider not their danger. And so the Ministers, they stand in the fore front of all the spight and malice of ungodly men: indeed God imploys them in honorable service, and that service that the Angels would take delight in; but though the service be honorable above the imployment of other works, yet the burden of danger likewise is greater than the danger of men that are in an inferior condition. Now when the Soul comes to get wisdom from Christ to think of the danger that it is in, then it will be content in that low estate in which it is. A poor man that is in a low condition thinks, I am low, and others are raised, but I know not what their burden is: and so, if he be rightly instructed in the School of Christ he comes to be contented.

3. *In a prosperous estate there is the burden of duty.* You look only at the sweet and comfort that they have, and the honor and respect that they have that are in a prosperous condition; but you must consider the duty that they owe to God; God requires more duty at their hands then at yours; you are ready to be discontented that you have not such parts and abilities as such have, but God requires more duty of them that have more parts, God requires more duty of them that have greater estates, than of you that have not such estates. Oh! you would fain have the honor, but can you carry the burden of the Duty?

4. The last is, *The burden of Account in a prosperous estate.* There is a great account that they are to give to God that enjoy great estates and a prosperous ondition: Now we are all Stewards; and one is a steward to a meaner man, perhaps an ordinary Knight; another is a Steward to a Noble man, an Earl: now the Steward of the meaner man, he hath not so much as the other hath under his hand; how shall he be discontented because there comes not so much under his hand as under the

others? No thinks he, I have leſs, and I am to give the leſs account: So your account, in compariſon of the Miniſters and Magiſtrates, will be nothing; you are to give an account of your own ſouls, and ſo are they; but you are to give an account for your own family, and ſo are they; but you are not to give an account for Congregations, and for Towns, and Cities, and Countries. You think of Princes and Kings, Oh! what a glorious condition they are in. But what do you think of a King to give account for all the diſorder, and wickedneſs in a Kingdom, that he poſſibly might have prevented? What abundance of Glory might a Prince bring to God, if ſo be that he bent his ſoul and all his thoughts to lift up the Name of God in a Kingdom: now what God looſes for want of this, that King Prince or Governour he muſt give an account for; its a ſpeech of *Chryſoſtome* in that place of the *Hebrews*, where it's ſaid that men muſt give an account of their ſouls, he wonders that any men in publick place can be ſaved, becauſe their account is ſo great that they are to give. And I remember I have read a ſpeech of *Philip* that was King of *Spain*, (though the Story ſaith of him, that he had ſuch a Natural Conſcience, that he profeſt *he would not do any thing againſt his conſcience, no, not in ſecret, for the gaining of the world*, yet when this man was to die) *Oh* ſaith he, *that I had never been a King; Oh that I had liv'd a ſolitary and private life all my days; then ſhould I have died a great deal more ſecurely, I ſhould with more co[illegible]e have gone before the Throne of God to give my account: but here's the fruit of my Kingdom, that I had all the glory of it, it hath made my account to be harder to give to God*, and thus he cries out when he was to die. And therefore you that live in private conditions, remember this, if you come into Chriſt's School and be taught this Leſſon, you will be quiet in your afflictions, or private eſtate, in regard your account is not ſo great as others. Its a ſpeech I remember I have met withal in *Latimer's* Sermons that he was wont to uſe, *That the half is more than the whole.* That is, when a man is in a mean condition, he is but half way towards the height of proſperity that others are in, yet ſaith he, this is more ſafe though it be a meaner condition than others. Thoſe that are in a high and proſperous conditi-

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on, there is annexed to it the burden of trouble, and of danger and of duty, and of account. And thus you see how Christ trains up his Scholars in his School; and though they be weak otherwise yet by his Spirit he gives them wisdom to understand these things aright.

The Eight Lesson is this, *Christ teaches them what a great and dreadful evil it is to be given up to ones hearts desires.* The understanding this Lesson that it is a most dreadful evil, one of the most hideous and fearful evils that can befal any man upon the face of the earth, for God to give him up to his hearts desires: when the soul understands this once, and together with it, (for it goes along together) that spiritual Judgments are more fearful than any outward judgments in the world, the understanding of this will teach any one to be content in Gods crossing of them in their desires. Thou art croſt in thy desires, now thou art discontented and vext and fretted at it, Is that thy only Misery that thou art croſt in thy desires? No no, thou art infinitely mistaken, the greatest misery of all is, for God to give thee up to thy hearts lust and desires to give thee up to thine own counsels: so you have it in *Psal.* 81. 11, 12, *But my people would not hearken to my voice, and* Israel *would none of me,* [what then?] *So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.* Oh saith *Bernard*, *Let me not have such a misery as that is, for to give me what I would have, to give me my hearts desires, it is one of the most hideous judgments in the world for a man to be given up to his hearts desires.* We have not indeed in Scripture any certain evident sign of a Reprobate, we cannot say (except we knew a man had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost) that he is a Reprobate, for we know not what God may work upon him; but the neareſt of all, and the blackeſt sign of a Reprobate is this, for God to give up a man to his hearts desires: all the pain of Diseases, all the calamities that can be thought of in the world, are no Judgments in comparison of this, for a man to be given up to his hearts desires; now when the soul comes to understand this, the Soul then cries out, Why am I so troubled that I have not my desires? There is nothing that God conveys his wrath more through then a prosperous Estate i

I remember I have read of a *Jewish* Tradition that they say of *Uzziah*, when God struck *Uzziah* with a Leprosie, they say that the Beams of the Sun was darted upon the fore-head of *Uzziah* and he was struck with Leprosie with the darting of the Beams of the Sun upon his forehead; the Scripture saith, indeed the Priest looked upon him; but they say there was a special light and Beam of the Sun upon the forehead that did discover the Leprosie to the Priests, and they say it was the way of conveying of it. Whether that were true or no, I am sure this is true, that the strong Beams of the Sun of prosperity upon many men makes them to be Leprous; Would any poor man in the Country have been discontented that he was not in *Uzziah*'s condition? He was a great King, but there was the Leprosie in his fore-head; the poor man may say, thou I live meanly in the Country, yet I thank God my body is whole and sound, would not any man rather have russet & skins of beasts to cloath him with, then to have satten and velvet that should have the Plague in it; The Lord conveys the Plague of his curse through prosperity, as much as through any thing in the world, and therefore the soul coming to understand this, this makes it to be quiet and content.

And then, *Spiritual Judgments are the greatest Judgments of all*; the Lord lays such an affliction upon my outward estate, but what if he had taken away my life, a mans health is a greater mercy then his estate; and you that are poor people you should consider of that; But is the health of a mans body better than his estate? what is the health of a mans soul? that's a great deal better; The Lord hath inflicted external Judgments, but he hath not inflicted spiritual Judgments upon thee, he hath not given thee up to hardness of heart. and taken away the spirit of prayer from thee in thine afflicted estate: Oh then be of good comfort, though there be outward afflictions upon thee, yet thy soul, thy more excellent part is not afflicted. Now when the soul comes to understand this, that here lies the sore wrath of God, to be given up to a mans desires, & for Spiritual Judgments to be upon a man, this quiets him, and contents him, though outward afflictions be upon him; perhaps one of a mans children hath the fit of an ague, or the tooth-

tooth-ach, but perhaps his next neighbour hath the Plague, or all his children are dead of the Plague, now ſhall he be ſo diſcontented, becauſe his children have the tooth-ach when his neighbours children are dead? Now think thus, Lord thou haſt laid an afflicted condition upon me, but Lord thou haſt not given me the Plague of a hard heart. Now take theſe eight things before mentioned, and lay them together, and you may well apply that Scripture in *Iſa.* 29 the laſt verſe, ſaith the text there *They alſo that erred in Spirit, ſhall come to underſtanding; and they that murmured ſhall learn Doctrine.* Hath there been any of you (as I fear many may be found) that have erred in ſpirit, even in regard of this truth that now we are a preaching of, and many that have murmured, Oh that this day you might come to underſtand, that Chriſt would bring you into his School and teach you underſtanding: *And they that murmured ſhall learn Doctrine:* what Doctrine ſhall they learn? Theſe eight Doctrines that I have opened to you. And if you will but throughly ſtudy theſe leſſons that I have ſet before your eyes, it will be a ſpecial help and means to cure your murmuring againſt, and repinings at the hand of God: And ſo you will come to learn Chriſtian Contentment. The Lord teach you throughly by his Spirit theſe Leſſons of Contentment.

SERMON.

SERMON VI. *At* Stepney, *August* 31. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

I Shall only add one Lesson more in Learning of Contentment, and then I shall come to the Fourth Head, The Excellency of Contentment.

The Ninth and last Lesson that Christ teaches those that he doth instruct in this Art of Contentment, *It is the right knowledg of Gods Providence*, and therein are these four things.

1. *The Universality of Providence*, that the soul must be throughly instructed in to come to this Art, to understand the Universality of Providence, that is, how the Providence of God goes through the whole world, extends it self to every thing; not only that God by his providence doth rule the world, and govern all things in general, but that it reaches to every particular not only to Kingdoms, to order the great affairs of Kingdoms, but it reaches to every mans Family, it reaches to every person in the Family, it reaches to every condition, yea, to every passage, to every thing that falls out concerning thee in every particular, *not one hair falls from thy head, not a Sparrow to the ground, without the providence of God*, There's nothing befalls thee, good or evil, but there is a providence of the Infinite Eternal First-being in that thing, and therein indeed is Gods infiniteness, that it reaches to the least things, to the least worm that is under thy feet: Then much more it reaches unto thee that art a rational Creature, the Providence of God is more special towards rational Creatures then any others: The understanding in a spiritual

ritual way the universality of providence, in every particular passage from morning to night every day; that there's not any thing that doth befal thee, but there's a hand of God in it, it is from God, it is a mighty furtherance to Contentment. Every man will grant the truth of the thing that it is so, but as the Apostle saith in *Hebrew* 11, 3. *By faith we understand that the worlds were made*, by faith we understand it, Why by Faith? we can understand by Reason that no finite thing can be from it self, And therefore that the world could not be of it self, but we can understand it by faith in another manner than by reason. So whatsoever we understand of God in way of Providence, yet when Christ doth take us into his School, we come to understand it by faith in a better manner than we do by reason.

2. *The efficacy that there is in Providence*; that is, That the providence of God goes on in all things with strength and power and it is not to be altered by our power, let us be discontented, and vext and troubled, and fret, and rage, yet we must not think to alter the course of providence by our discontent Some of *Jobs* friends said to him, *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee, and shall the rock be removed out of his place?* Job. 18. 4. when they saw him to be impatient, So I may say to every discontented impatient heart, What, shall the providence of God change its course for thee? Do'st thou think it such a weak thing, that because it doth not please thee it must alter its course? Be thou content or not content, the providence of God will go on, it hath an efficacy of power and vertue, to carry all things before it: Canst thou make one hair black or white with all the stir that thou keepest? When you are in a Ship at Sea thath hath all her Sails spread with a full gale of wind, and swiftly sailing; Can you make it stand still with running up and down in the Ship? No more can you make the providence of God to alter and change it's course with your vexing and fretting, but it will go on with power, do what thou canst. Do but understand the power and efficacy of providence, and it will be a mighty means for the helping to learn this lesson of Contentment.

3. *The infinite variety of the works of providence*, and yet *the order*

order of things one working towards another; there is infinite variety of the works of Gods in an ordinary providence, and yet all work in an orderly way; we put these two together, for God in the way of his providence causes a thousand thousand things one to depend upon another, there are infinite several Wheels (as I may say) in the works of providence, all the works that ever God did from all eternitie, or ever will do, put them all together, and all make up but one work, and they have been as several wheels that have had their orderly motion to attain the end that God from all eternitie hath appointed: We indeed look at things by pieces, we look at one particular and do not consider the reference that one thing hath to another; but God he looks at all things at once, and sees the reference that one thing hath to another, As a Child that looks upon a Clock looks first upon one wheel, and then upon any other wheel, he looks not at all together, or the dependance that one hath upon another, but the workman hath his eyes upon all together and sees the dependance of all one upon another; and the Art that there is in the dependance of one upon another; so it is in Gods providence. Now observe how this works to Contentment; where there is such a passage of providence befals me, that's one wheel, and it may be if this wheel should be stopt, there might a thousand other wheels come to be stopt by this: as in a Clock, stop but one wheel and you stop every wheel, because they have dependance one upon another: so when God hath ordered a thing for the present to be thus and thus, how do'st thou know how many things do depend upon this thing? God may have some work that he hath to do twenty years hence that may depend upon this passage of providence, that falls out this day or this week. And here (by the way) we may see a great deal of evil that there is in discontent, for thou wouldest have Gods providence altered in such and such a particular, indeed if it were only in that particular, and that had reference to nothing else, it were not so much but by thy desire to have thy will in such a particular, it may be thou wouldest cross God in a thousand things that he hath to bring about: because it is possible there may be a thousand things depend upon that one thing that thou wouldest fain

have

have to be otherwise than it is; just as if a child should cry out and say, let but that one wheel stop; though he saith but one wheel, yet if that stop, it is as much as if he should say, they must all stop. So in providence, let but this one passage of providence stop, it is as much as if a thousand stop'd. Let me therefore be quiet and content; for though I be croſt in some one particular, God attains his end, at leaſt his end may be furthered in a thouſand things by this one thing that I am croſt in; therefore let a man conſider, this is an act of providence, and how do I know what God is about to do, and how many things depend upon this providence? now we are willing to ſuffer our friends will to be croſt in one thing, ſo that our friend may attain to what he deſires in a thouſand things: If thou haſt a love and friendſhip to God, be willing to be croſt in ſome few things, that the Lord may have his work to go on in the univerſal, in a thouſand of other things. Now, that's the third thing to be underſtood in Gods providence, that Chriſt doth learn thoſe that he teacheth, in the Art of Contentment.

4. Chriſt teacheth them the knowledge of Providence, that is, *The knowledge of Gods uſual way in his dealing with his People more particularly.* The other is, The knowledge of God in his Providence in general: But the right underſtanding of the way of God in his Providence towards his People and Saints, is a notable Leſſon to help us in the Art of Contentment. If we come once to know a mans way and courſe, we may better ſuit, and be contented to live with him than before we came to know his way and courſe: As when a man comes to live in a ſociety with men and women, it may be the men and women may be good, but till a man comes to know their way and courſe, and diſpoſition, many things may fall very croſs, and we think they are very hard, but when we come to be acquainted with their way and ſpirit, then we can ſuit and concur with them very well, and the reaſon of our trouble is, becauſe we do not underſtand their way. So it is with you, thoſe that are but as ſtrangers to God, and do not underſtand the way of God, they are troubled with the providences of God, and they think them very ſtrange, and cannot tell what to make of them becauſe they underſtand not the ordinary courſe and way of

God towards his People. If a ſtranger ſometimes comes into a Family, and ſees ſuch and ſuch things done, he wonders what the matter is, but thoſe that are acquainted with it, it troubles them not at all. So ſervants when they come firſt together, and know not another, it may be they are froward and diſcontented: but when they come to be acquainted with one anothers ways, then they are not diſcontented: Juſt ſo it is when we come firſt to underſtand Gods ways.

Object. But you will ſay, *What do you underſtand by Gods ways?*

Anſw. By that I mean theſe three things. And when we come to know them, we ſhall not wonder ſo much at the providence of God, but be quiet and contented with them.

1. The firſt thing is this: *Gods ordinary courſe is, That his people in this World ſhould be in an afflicted condition:* God hath revealed in his Word, and we may there find he hath ſet it down to be his ordinary way, even from the beginning of the world to this day, (but more eſpecially in the times of the Goſpel) that his People here ſhould be in an afflicted condition. Now men that do not underſtand this, they ſtand and wonder to hear of the people of God that they are afflicted, and the enemies proſper in their way; for thoſe that ſeek God in his way, and ſeek for Reformation, for them to be afflicted, routed and ſpoyled, and the enemies to prevail, they wonder at it: But now, one that is in the School of Chriſt, he is taught by Jeſus Chriſt, that God by his eternal Counſels hath ſet this to be his courſe and way, to bring up his people in this world in an afflicted condition, and therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *Account it not ſtrange concerning the fiery tryal, 1. Pet. 4. 12.* We are not therefore to be diſcontented with it, ſeeing God hath ſet ſuch a courſe and way, and we know ſuch is the will of God that it ſhould be ſo.

The Second thing that is in Gods way, is this, *Uſually when God intends the greateſt mercy to any of his People, he doth bring them into the loweſt condition.* God doth ſeem to go quite croſs, and work in a contrary way; when he intends the greateſt mercies to his people, he doth firſt uſually bring them into very low conditions, if it be a bodily mercy, an out outward mercy that he intends to beſtow, he uſeth to bring them bodily low, and outwardly

wardly low, if it be a mercy in their estates that he intends to bestow, he brings them low in that, and then raises them; and in their names he brings them low there, and then raises them; and in their spirits, God doth ordinarily bring their spirits low, and then raises their spirits; usually the People of God before the greatest comfort, have the greatest afflictions, and sorrows; now those that understand not Gods ways, they think that when God brings his people into sad conditions, that God leaves and forsakes them, and that God doth intend no great matter of good to them; but now a Child of God that is instructed in this way of God, he is not troubled; my condition is very low, but (saith he) this is Gods way when he intends the greatest mercy, to bring men under the greatest afflictions. When he intended to raise *Joseph* to be the Second in the Kingdom, God cast him into a Dungeon a little before. So when God intended to raise *David*, and set him upon the Throne, he made him *to be hunted as a Patridge in the Mountains.* 1. Sam. 26. 20. God went this way with his Son; Christ himself went into Glory by suffering, *Heb.* 2. 20, And if God deal so with his own Son, much more with his People; As a little before break of day, you shall observe it is darker than it was any time before; so God doth use to make our condition darker a little before the mercy come. God bestoweth great mercies when we are in a very low condition, God knows what he hath to do before-hand, he knows when his times comes for great mercies; it is the way of God to do so. Be but instructed aright in this course and tract that God uses to walk in; and that will help us to Contentment exceedingly.

The Third thing that there is in Gods way and course, is this *It is the way of God to work by contraries, to turn the greatest evil into the greatest good.* To grant great good after great evil, is one thing, and to turn great evils into the greatest good that's another; and yet that's Gods way, the greatest good that God intends for his People, many times he works it out of the greatest evil, the greatest light is brought out of the greatest darkness: and *Luther* (I remember) hath a notable expression for this, (saith he) it is the way of God, he doth humble,

that he might exalt, he doth kill, that he might make alive, he doth confound, that he might glorifie: this is the way of God (saith he) but (saith he) every one doth not understand this: this is the Art of Arts, and the Science of Sciences, the Knowledge of Knowledges to understand this, that God doth use when he will bring life, he doth bring it out of death, he brings joy out of sorrow, and he brings prosperity out of adversity, yea, and many times he brings Grace out of Sin, that is, makes use of sin to work furtherance of grace; it is the way God uses to bring good out of evil; not only to overcome the evil, but to make the evil to work towards good: here's the way of God: now when the soul comes to understand this, it will take away our murmuring, and bring Contentment into our spirits: But I fear there are but few that understand it aright, perhaps they read of such things, and hear of such things in a Sermon, but they are not by Jesus Christ instructed in this, that this is the way of God, to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil.

Thus having dispatch'd the Third Head, the Lessons that we are to learn; we come to the Fourth, and that is, *The excellency of this Grace of Contentment*: And there is a great deal of excellency in Contentment; that is a kind of Lesson also for us to learn. And this Head likewise will be somewhat long.

Saith the Apostle, *I have learned.* As if he should say, Blessed be God for this: Oh! it is a mercy of God to me that I have learned this Lesson, I find so much good in this Contentment, that I would not for a World but have it: I have learned it, saith he.

Now the very Heathens had a sight of a great Excellency that there is in Contentment: I remember I have read of *Antisthenes* a Philosopher, that desired of his Gods (speaking after the Heathenish way) nothing in this world to make his life happy, but CONTENTMENT; and if he might have any thing that he would desire to make his life happy, he would ask of them, That he might have the spirit of *Socrates*, that he might have such a spirit as *Socrates* had, to be able to bear any wrong, any injuries

injuries that he met withal, and to continue in a quiet temper of spirit whatsoever befel him; for that was the temper of *Socrates*, whatever befel him, he continued the same man; whatever cross befel him, no body could perceive any alteration of his spirit, though never so great crosses did befal him. This a Heathen did attain to by the strength of nature, and a common work of the spirit: Now this *Antisthenes* saw such an excellency in this spirit: As when God said to *Solomon*, *what shall I give thee?* he asked of God *Wisdome*: so saith he, *If the Gods should put it to me to know what I would have, I should desire this thing, that I might have the spirit of* Socrates: he saw a great excellency that there was in this. And certainly, a Christian may see abundance of excellency in it: I shall labour to set it out to you in this Sermon, that you may be in love with this Grace of Contentment.

In the first place, *By Contentment we come to give God that worship that is due to him*: It is a special part of Divine Worship that we owe to God, If we be content in a Christian way according as hath been opened to you; I say it is a special part of the Divine Worship that the Creature owes to the infinite Creator, in that I do tender that respect that is due from me to the Creator. The words that the *Greeks* have that signifie to Worship, it is as much as to come and crouch before another, as a dog should come crouching unto you, & be willing to lye down at your feet: so the Creature in the apprehension of its own baseness, and the infinite Excellency that there is in God above it; when it comes to worship God, it comes and crouches to God, and it lies down at the feet of God: then doth the Creature worship God. When you see a dog come crouching to you, and you can make him, with holding you hand over him to lye down at your feet; then consider thus should you do before the Lord you should come crouching to him, and lye down at his feet even upon your backs or bellies, to lye down in the dust before him, so as to be willing that he should do with you what he will; as sometimes you may turn a dog this way and that way, up and down with the hand, and there he lyes before you, according to your shewing him with your hand: So when the Creature shall come and lye down thus before

See this opened at large in Gospel-Worship *on Levit.* 10. 3.

fore the Lord, then a Creature worſhips God, doth tender up that worſhip that is due to God. Now in what diſpoſition of heart do we thus crouch to God more, then when we have this Contentation in all conditions that God diſpoſeth us unto? This is a crouching unto Gods diſpoſe, to be like the poor Woman of *Canaan*, when Chriſt ſaid, *it is not fit to give Childrens meat to Dogs, but* (ſaith ſhe) *the Dogs have crums*: I am a Dog I confeſs, I, but let me have a crum. And ſo when the ſoul ſhall be in ſuch a diſpoſition as to lie down and ſay, Lord, I am but as a Dog, yet let me have a crum, then doth it highly honor God. It may be ſome of you have not your Table ſpread as others have, but God gives you crums; now ſaith the poor Woman, *Dogs have crums*, and when you can find your hearts thus ſubjecting unto God, to be but as a Dog, and can be contented and bleſs God for any crum, I ſay, this is a great worſhip of God, you worſhip God by this more then when you come to hear a ſermon, or ſpend half an hour or an hour in prayer, or when you come to receive a Sacrament; Theſe are the Acts of Gods Worſhip; I, but theſe are but external Acts of Worſhip, to Hear, and Pray, and receive Sacraments: But now this is the ſoul-worſhip, to ſubject it ſelf thus to God. You that often will worſhip God by hearing and praying, and receiving Sacraments, and yet afterwards will be froward and diſcontented, know, that God regards not that worſhip, he will have the ſoul-worſhip in this ſubjecting of the ſoul to God. Obſerve it I beſeech you; in active Obedience, there we worſhip God by doing that that pleaſes God, but by paſſive Obedience we do as well worſhip God, by being pleaſed with that which God doth. Now when I perform a duty, I worſhip God, I do what pleaſes God: why ſhould not I as well worſhip God when I am pleaſed with what God doth? As it was ſaid of Chriſts Obedience, Chriſt was active in his paſſive Obedience, and paſſive in his active Obedience; So the Saints they are paſſive in their active Obedience; they are firſt paſſive in their reception of Grace, and then active: And when they come to paſſive Obedience, they are active, they put forth Grace in active Obedience, when they perform actions to God, then ſaith the ſoul, Oh! that I could do that that pleaſes God: when they come

come to ſuffer any croſs, Oh! that what God doth, might pleaſe me: I labour to do what pleaſes God, and I labour that what God doth, ſhall pleaſe me; here's a Chriſtian indeed, that ſhall endeavour both theſe: now this is but one ſide of a Chriſtian, to endeavour to do what pleaſes God, but you muſt as well endeavour to be pleaſed with what God doth, and ſo you ſhall come to be a compleat Chriſtian when you can do both. And that's the firſt thing in the excellency of this Grace of Contentment.

The ſecond thing in opening of this Excellency of Contentment is, *That in Contentment there is much exerciſe of Grace*, There is much ſtrength of Grace, yea, there is much beauty of Grace in Contentment, there is much exerciſe of Grace, ſtrength of Grace, and beauty of Grace, I put all thoſe together.

1. *Much Exerciſe of Grace*, There is a compoſition of Grace in Contentment, there is Faith, and there is Humility, and Love, and there is Patience, and there is Wiſdom, and there is Hope, all Graces almoſt are compounded, its an oyl that hath the ingredients of all kind of Graces, and therefore though you cannot ſee the particular Grace, yet in this oyl you have it all; God ſees the Graces of his Spirit exerciſed in a ſpecial manner, and this pleaſes God at the heart to ſee the Graces of his Spirits exerciſed. In ſome one action that you do, you may exerciſe ſome one Grace eſpecially; but now in Contentment, you exerciſe a great many Graces at once.

2. *There is a great deal of ſtrength of Grace in Contentment.* It argues a great deal of ſtrength in the body to be able to endure hard weather, and whatſoever falls out, and yet not to be much altered by it; ſo it argues ſtrength of Grace to be content; You that complain of weakneſs of memory, and weakneſs of parts, you cannot do what others do in other things, but have you this gracious heart-contentment, that hath been opened to you? I know that you have attained to ſtrength of Grace in this, when it is ſo ſpiritual as hath been opened to you in the explication of this point. As it is with a mans brain, if a man be diſtempered in his body, and hath many obſtructions in his body, hath an ill ſtomach, and his ſpleen and

and liver obſtructed, and yet for all this his brain is not diſtempered, it is an argument of great ſtrength of brain, and though there be many ill fumes that riſe from his corrupt ſtomach, yet ſtill his brain is not diſtempered, but he continues in the free exerciſe of the uſe of his reaſon and underſtanding; every one may underſtand that this man hath a very ſtrong brain, that ſuch things ſhall not diſtemper him, whereas other people that have a weak brain, if they do not digeſt but one meals meat, the fumes that do ariſe from their ſtomachs, do diſtemper their brain and make them unfit for every thing, whereas you ſhould have others that have ſtrong heads, and ſtrong brains, though their ſtomach be ill, that they do not digeſt meat, yet ſtill they have the free uſe of their Brain, this argues ſtrength: So it is in a mans ſpirit, you ſhall have many that have weak ſpirits, and if they have any ill fumes, if accidents befal them, you ſhall preſently have them out of temper; but you ſhall have other men, that though things do fume up, yet ſtill they keep in a ſteady way, and have the uſe of reaſon and of other graces, and poſſeſs their ſouls with patience. As I remember its reported of the Eagle, its not like other Fowls; other Fowls when they are hungry make a noiſe, but the Eagle is never heard to make a noiſe, though it wants food, and its from the magnitude of his ſpirit, that will not make ſuch complaints as other Fowls will do when they want food, it is becauſe it is above hunger, and above thirſt: So it is an argument of a gracious magnitude of ſpirit that whatſoever befals it, yet it is not always whining and complaining ſo as others are, but goes on ſtill in its way and courſe, and bleſſes God, & keeps in a conſtant tenour whatſoever things befal it; ſuch things as cauſe others to be dejected, and fretted and vexed, and takes away all the comforts of their lives, it makes no alteration at all in the ſpirits of theſe men and women, I ſay this is a ſign of a great deal of ſtrength of grace.

3. *Its alſo an argument of a great deal of beauty of Grace*, Its a ſpeech that *Seneca* a Heathen once had, ſaith he, when you go abroad into groves and woods, and there you ſee the talneſs of the trees, and their ſhadows, it ſtrikes a kind of awful fear of a Deity in you, and when you ſee the vaſt Rivers and Fountains,

and

and deep waters that ſtrikes a kind of a fear of God in you, but (ſaith he) do you ſee a man that is quiet in tempeſts, and that lives happily in the midſt of adverſities, why do not you worſhip that man? He doth think him a man even to be honored, that ſhall be quiet, and live a happy life, though in the middeſt of adverſities.. The Glory of God appears here more than in any of his Works there is no Work that God hath made, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all the World, wherein ſo much of the Glory of God doth appear, as in a man that liveth quietly in the midſt of adverſity. That was that that convinced the King, when he ſaw the three children could walk in the midſt of the fiery furnace, and not be touched, the King was mightily convinced by this, that ſurely their God was a great God indeed, and that they were highly beloved of their God, that could walk in the midſt of the furnace, & not to be touch'd, whereas the others that came but to the mouth of the furnace were devoured: ſo when a Chriſtian can walk in the midſt of fiery trials, and not his garments ſinged, but have comfort and joy in the midſt of all (as *Paul* in ſtocks) can ſing, (that wrought upon the Gaoler:) ſo it will convince men when they ſee the power of Grace in the midſt of afflictions, ſuch afflictions as would make others to roar under them, yet they can behave themſelves in a gracious and holy manner; Oh! it is the glory of a Chriſtian. It is that that is ſaid to be the glory of Chriſt, (for ſo by Interpreters it is thought to be meant of Chriſt) In *Micah* 5, 5. *And this man* (the text ſaith) *ſhall be the peace, when the* Aſſyrian *ſhall come into our Land, and when he ſhall tread in our Palaces.* This man ſhall be the peace when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our Land; for one to be in peace when there is no Enemies, it is no great matter, but, ſaith the text, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our Land, then this man ſhall be the peace; that is, when all ſhall be in an hubbub & uproar, yet then this man ſhall be peace: That's the trial of grace, when you find Jeſus Chriſt in your hearts to be peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into the Land You may think you find peace in Chriſt, when you have no outward troubles; but is Chriſt your peace when the Aſſyrian comes into the Land, when an Enemy comes? Suppoſe you ſee an Enemy marching againſt you to plunder you, what

would be your peace? Jesus Christ would be peace to the soul, when the enemy comes. That which is said of Christ, may be applied to this grace of Contentment, when the *Assyrians*, the Plunderers, the Enemies, when any affliction, trouble, distress, doth befall such a heart, then this grace of Contentment brings peace to the soul; at that time brings peace to the soul, when the *Assyrian* comes into the Land. The grace of Contentment, it's an excellent grace, there's much beauty, much strength in it; there is a great deal of worth in this grace, and therefore be in love with it.

The third thing in the Excellency of Contentment, is this; *By Contentment the soul is fitted to receive mercy, and to do service.* I'll put these two together, Contentment makes the soul fit to receive mercy, and to do service; no man or woman in the world is so fit for to receive the grace of God, and to do the work of God, as those that have contented spirits:

1. *Those are fitted to receive mercy from the Lord, that are contented*; as now, If you would have a vessel to take in any liquor, you must hold the vessel still; if the vessel stir, & shake up and down, you cannot pour in any thing, but you will bid, hold still, that you may pour it in, and not lose any: So, if we would be the vessels to receive Gods mercy, and would have the Lord pour in his mercy to us, we must have quiet, still hearts, we must not have hearts harrying up & down in trouble, discontent, and vexing, but we must have still and quiet hearts, if we would receive mercy from the Lord: If a child flings and throws up and down for a thing, you will not give it him then when he cries so, but first you will have the child quiet; though perhaps you do intend the child shall have the thing he cries so, but you will not give it him till he is quiet, and comes and stands still before you, and is contented without it, and then you will give it him: And truly so doth the Lord deal with us, (for our dealings with him are just as your froward Children are with you) as soon as you would have a thing from God, if you have it not you are disquieted presently, and all in an uproar (as it were)

in

in your ſpirits: God intends mercy to you, but ſaith God, you ſhall not have it yet, I will ſee you quiet firſt, and then in the quietneſs of your hearts, come to me and ſee what I will do with you. I appeal to you, you that are any ways acquainted with the ways of God, Have you not found this to be the way of God towards you? when you have been troubled for want perhaps of ſome ſpiritual comfort, and your hearts were vexed at it, you get nothing from God all this while: but now, if you have got your heart into a quiet frame, and can ſay, Well, it's fit the Lord ſhould do with us poor Creatures what he will, I am under his feet, and am reſolv'd to do what I can to honour him; and let him do with me what he will, I will ſeek him as long as I live, I will be content with what God gives, and whether he gives or no, I will be content; yea are you in this frame, ſaith God? now you ſhall have comfort, now I will give you the mercy. A priſoner muſt not think to get off his fetters by pulling and tearing, he may gall his fleſh, and rend it to the very bone, certainly he will be unfettered never the ſooner, but if he would have his fetters taken off, he muſt quietly give up himſelf to ſome man to take them off. If a beggar after he hath knock'd once or twice at the door, and you come not, and thereupon he is vex'd and troubled, and thinks much that you let him ſtand a little while without any thing, you think that this beggar is not fit to receive an alms; but if you hear two or three beggars at your door, and if you hear them out at your window ſay, Let us be content to ſtay, perhaps they are buſie, it is fit that we ſhould ſtay, it's well if we have any thing at laſt, we deſerve nothing at all, and therefore we may well wait a while, you would then quickly ſend them an alms: So God deals with the heart, when it is in a diſquiet way, then God doth not give; but when the heart lies down quietly under God's hand, then is the heart in a fit frame to receive mercy: *Your ſtrength ſhall be, to ſit ſtill*, ſaith God; you ſhall not be delivered from *Babylon*, but by your ſitting ſtill.

2. As fit to receive mercy, *ſo fit to do ſervice*; Oh! the quiet fruits of Righteouſneſs, the peaceable fruits of Righteouſneſs; they indeed do proſper and multiply moſt when they come to be the peaceable fruits of Righteouſneſs. As the Philoſophers ſay

of every thing that moves, nothing that moves, but it moves upon ſomthing that is immoveable; as a thing that moves upon the earth, if the earth were not ſtill, it could not move.

Object. The Ships move upon the Sea, and that is not ſtill.

Anſw. But the Seas, they move upon that which is ſtill and immoveable, there is nothing moves, but it hath ſomething immoveable: that doth uphold it: the wheels in a Coach, they move up and down, but the Axeltree that moves not up and down; ſo it is with the heart of man. As they ſay of the Heaven, it moves up and down upon a Pole that is immoveable: ſo it is in the heart of man, if he will move to do ſervice to God, he muſt have a ſteady heart within him, that muſt help him to move in the ſervice of God; thoſe that have unſteady diſquiet ſpirits, that have no ſtedfaſtneſs at all in them, they are not fit to do ſervice for God; but ſuch as have ſtedfaſtneſs in their ſpirits, they are men and women fit to do any ſervice, and that's the reaſon that when the Lord hath any great work for any ſervant of his to do, uſually he doth firſt quiet their ſpirits, he doth bring their ſpirits into a quiet ſweet frame to be contented with any thing, and then he ſets them about imployment.

The fifth excellency is this, *Contentment, it doth deliver us from abundance of temptations.* Oh! the temptations that men of diſcontented ſpirits are ſubject to: The Devil loves to fiſh in troubled waters; That is our Proverb of men and women; their diſpoſition is to fiſh in troubled waters; they ſay it is good fiſhing in troubled waters, this is the Maxime of the Devil, he loves to fiſh in troubled waters, where he ſees the ſpirits of men and women troubled and vexed, there the Devil comes, (ſaith he) there is good fiſhing for me, when he ſees men and women go diſcontented up and down, and he can get them alone, then he comes with his temptations, (ſaith he) Will you ſuffer ſuch a thing? take ſuch a ſhifting indirect way, do not you ſee how poor you are; others are brave, you know not what you ſhall do againſt Winter, to provide fewel, and get bread for you and your Children, and ſo he tempts them to unlawful courſes: this

this is the ſpecial diſtemper that the Devils faſtens upon, whenhe brings men and women to give up their ſouls to him, it is upon diſcontent: That is the ground of all thoſe that have been Witches, and ſo have given up themſelves to the Devil, the riſe of it hath been their diſcontent; and therefore it is obſervable, that thoſe the Devil worketh upon to make them witches, uſually they are old and melancholly people, and women eſpecially, and thoſe that are of the poorer ſort, that are diſcontent at home; their Neighbours trouble them and vex them, and their ſpirits are weak, and they cannot bear it, ſo upon that the Devil faſtens his temptations, and draws them to any thing: if they be poor, then he promiſeth them money; if they have revengeful ſpirits, then he tells them that he will revenge them upon ſuch and ſuch perſons, now this quiets and contents them. Oh! there's matter of temptation for the Devil, where he meets with a diſcontented ſpirit. As *Luther* ſaith of God, God doth not dwell in *Babylon*, but in *Salem*; *Babylon* ſignifies confuſion, and *Salem* ſignifies peace; now God doth not dwell in ſpirits that are in a confuſion, but he dwells in peaceable and quiet ſpirits; O, if you would free your ſelves from temptations, labour for Contentment: It is the peace of God that guards the heart from temptation. I remember I have read of one *Marius Curio*, that when he had bribes ſent him to tempt him to be unfaithful to his Countrey, he was ſitting at home at dinner with a diſh of Turnips, and they came and promiſed him rewards; ſaith he, that man that can be contented with this fare that I have, will not be tempted with your rewards, I thank God I am content with this fare, and as for rewards, let them be offered to thoſe that cannot be content to dine with a diſh of Turnips: So, the truth is, we ſee it apparently, that the reaſon why many do betray their truſt in their imployment and ſervice for the Kingdom, is becauſe they cannot be contented to be in a low condition. Let a man be contented to be in a low condition, and to go meanly clothed, if God ſees it fit, ſuch a man is ſhot-free (as I may ſo ſay) from thouſands of temptations of the Devil, that do prevail againſt others, to the damning of their ſouls: Too many people are leſs concerned in the danger

danger for their ſouls than they are for their outward eſtates: you think it is a ſad thing to be in danger of your outward eſtates, that you may loſe all in a night, but if you have not this contented ſpirit within you, you are in more danger of the temptations of the Devil to be plundred that way of any good, and to be led into ſin; Oh when men think thus, they muſt live as brave as they were wont to do, theſe men make themſelves a prey to the Devil; but for ſuch as can ſay, let God do with me what he pleaſes, I am content to ſubmit to his hand in it, the Devil will ſcarce meddle with ſuch men. It's a notable ſpeech of a Philoſopher that liv'd upon mean fare, and as he was eating herbs and roots, ſaith one to him, If you would but pleaſe *Dionyſius*, you need not eat herbs and roots: but he anſwered him thus, If you would but be content with ſuch mean fare, you need not flatter *Dionyſius*. So temptations will no more prevail upon a contented man, than a dart that is thrown againſt a braſen wall. That's the fifth particular.

The ſixth Excellency is, *The abundant comforts in a mans life that Contentement will bring:* Contentment will make a mans life exceeding ſweet and comfortable, nothing more than the grace of Contentment; many ways I will ſhew how it brings in Comfort.

1. As firſt, VVhat a man hath, *he hath it in a kind of Independent way*, not depending upon any creature for his comfort.

2. *A contented man whoſe eſtate is low, if God raiſes his eſtate, he hath the love of God in it*, and then it's abundantly more ſweet then if he had it, and his heart not contented; or if he had not the love of God in it: for it may be God grants to a diſcontented man his deſire, but he cannot ſay it is from love; if a man hath quieted his ſpirit firſt, and then God grant him his deſire, he may have more comfort in it, and more aſſurance that he hath the love of God in it.

3. This Contentment is a comfort to a mans ſpirit in this, *That it doth keep his comforts, and keep out whatſoever may damp his comforts, or put out the light of them.* I may compare this grace of Contentment to a Mariners Lanthorn; a Mariner when he is at Sea, let him have never ſo much proviſion in his Ship, yet if he be thouſands of leagues from land, or in a rode that he ſhall not meet

meet with a Ship in three or four moneths, if he hath never a Lanthorn in his Ship, nor nothing whereby he may keep a Candle-light in a ſtorm, he will be in a ſad condition, he would give a great deal to have a Lanthorn, or ſomthing that may ſerve inſtead of it. When a ſtorm comes in the night, and he cannot have any light come above board, but it is puſt out preſently, his condition is very ſad: ſo many men can have light of comfort when there is no ſtorm, but let there come but any affliction, any ſtorm upon them, there light is put out preſently, and what ſhall they do now? when the heart is furniſhed with this grace of Contentment, this grace is (as it were) the Lanthorn, and it keeps comfort in the ſpirit of a man, light in the midſt of a ſtorm and tempeſt. When you have a Lanthorn in the midſt of a ſtorm, you can carry a light every where up and down the ſhip, to the top of the Maſt if you will, and yet keep it light; ſo the comfort of a true Chriſtian when it is enlivened with the grace of Contentment, it may be kept light whatever ſtorms or tempeſts come, yet he can keep light in his ſoul. Oh! this helps thy comforts exceeding much.

Seventhly, *There is this excellency in Contentment; that it fetches in the comfort of thoſe things we have not really in poſſeſſion*; and perhaps many that have not outward things, have more comfort than thoſe have that do enjoy them themſelves: As now a man by diſtilling herbs, though he hath not the herbs themſelves, yet having the water that is diſtilled out of them, he may enjoy the benefit of the herbs; So, though a man hath not the real poſſeſſion of ſuch an outward eſtate, an outward comfort, yet he by the grace of Contentment may fetch it it to himſelf. By the Art of Navigation we can fetch in the riches of the *Eaſt* and *Weſt-Indies* to our ſelves; ſo by the Art of Contentment, we may fetch in the comfort of any condition to our ſelves, that is we may have that comfort by Contentment, that we ſhould have if we had the thing it ſelf. There is a notable ſtory you have for this in *Plutarch*, in the life of *Pyrrhus*; one *Sineus* comes to him, and would very fain have had him deſiſt from the wars, and not war with the Romans: ſaith he to him, May it pleaſe your Majeſty, It is reported that the Romans are very good men of VVar, and if it pleaſe the gods we do overcome them, what

what benefit ſhall we have of that victory? *Pyrrhus* anſwered him, we ſhall ſtraight then conquer all the reſt of *Italy* with eaſe; ſaith *Sineus*, indeed it is likely which your Grace ſpeaketh, but when we have won *Italy*, will then our wars end? If the gods were pleaſed, ſaid *Pyrrhus*, that the victory were atchieved, the way were then broad open for us to attain great Conqueſts; for who would not afterwards go into *Africk*, and ſo to *Carthage*? But (ſaith *Sineus*) when we have all in our hands, what ſhall we do in the end? then *Pyrrhus* laughing, told him again, we will then be quiet, and take our eaſe, and make feaſts every day, and be as merry one with another as we can poſſible: ſaith *Sineus*, what letteth us now to be as quiet, and merry together, ſith we enjoy that preſently without further travel and trouble, which we ſhould go ſeek for abroad, with ſuch ſhedding of blood, and ſo manifeſt danger; cannot you ſit down and be merry now? ſo a man may think, if I had ſuch a thing, then I would have another, and if you had that, then you would have more, and what if you got all you deſire? then you would be content, why? you may be content now with them: Certainly, our Contentment doth not conſiſt in the getting of the thing we deſire, but in Gods faſhioning our ſpirits to our condition, there's ſome men that have not a foot of ground of their own, yet will live better than other men that are heirs to a great deal of Land. I have know it in the Countrey ſometimes, that a man lives upon his own land and yet lives very poorly; but you ſhall have another man that ſhall Farm his Land, and yet by his good husbandry, and by his care, ſhall live better ſometimes then he that hath the Land of his own. So a man by this Art of Contentment may live better without an eſtate, than another man can of an eſtate: Oh! it adds exceeding much to the comfort of a Chriſtian: and that I may ſhew it further, there is more comfort in the Grace of Contentment, than there is in any poſſeſſions whatſoever; a man hath more comfort in being content without a thing, that he can have in the thing that he in a diſcontented way doth deſire.

You think if I had ſuch a thing, than I ſhould be content. I ſay there is more good in Contentment, than there is in the thing that you would fain have to cure your diſcontent, and that

that I shall open in divers particulars. As thus;

1. I would fain have such a thing, and then I could be content, but if I had it, then it were but the creature that did help to my Contentment; but now it is the Grace of God in my soul that makes me content: and surely it is better to be content with the Grace of God in my soul, than with the enjoying of an outward comfort.

2. If I had such a thing, indeed my estate might be better, but my soul would not be better; but by Contentment my soul is better; that would not be bettered by an estate, or lands, or friends; but Contentment makes my self to be better: and therefore Contentment is a better portion than the thing is that I would fain have to be my portion.

3. If I get Content by having my desire satisfied, that is but self-love; but when I am contented with the hand of God, and am willing to be at his dispose that comes from my love to God, in having my desire satisfied, there I am contented through self-love, but through the Grace of Contentment, I come to be contented out of love to God; and it is not better to be contented from a principle of love to God, than from a principle of self-love?

4. If I am contented because I have that that I have a desire to, perhaps I am contented in that one particular, but that one particular doth not furnish me with Contentment in another thing; perhaps I may grow more dainty and nice, and froward in other things: if you give children what they would have in some things, they grow so much the more coy and dainty, and discontented if they have not other things that they would have; but if I have once overcome my heart, and am contented through the Grace of God in my heart, then this doth not content me only in particular but in general, whatsoever befalls me. I am discontented, and would fain have such a thing, and afterwards I have it: now doth this prepare me to be contented in other things? No, but when I have gotten this Grace of Contentment, I am prepared to be contented in all conditions: and thus you see that Contentment doth bring comfort to a mans life, this a mans life full of comfort in this World: yea, the truth is, it is even Heaven upon Earth; why, what is

Heaven, but the rest and quiet of a mans spirit; what's the special thing that is in Heaven, but rest and joy, that makes the life of Heaven, there's rest and joy, and satisfaction in God: so it's here in a contented spirit, there's rest and joy, and satisfaction in God; In Heaven, there's singing praises to God; a contented heart is always praising and blessing God; thou hast Heaven while thou art upon Earth, when thou hast a contented spirit; yea, in some regards it's better than Heaven. How is that, you will say? there's some kind of honour that God hath in it, and some excellency that he hath not in Heaven, and that is this:

In Heaven there is no overcoming of temptatious, they are not put to any trials by afflictions: there in Heaven they have exercise of Grace, but they have nothing but encouragement to it, and indeed, those that are there, their grace is perfect, and in that they do excel us, but there is nothing to cross their grace, they have no trials at all to tempt them to do contrary; but now for a man or woman to be in the midst of afflictions, temptations and troubles, and yet to have grace exercised, and yet to be satisfied in God and Christ, and in the Word and Promises in the midst of all they suffer, this may seem to be an honour that God hath from us, that he hath not from the Angels and Saints in Heaven Is it so much for one that is in Heaven that hath nothing else but good from God, hath nothing to try them, no temptations, is that so much for them to be praising and blessing God, as for the poor soul that is in the midst of trials and temptations, and afflictions, and troubles, for this soul to go on praising, and blessing, and serving God? (I say) it is an excellency that thou shalt not have in Heaven, and God shall not have this kind of glory from thee in Heaven, and therefore be contented, and prize this Contentment, and be willing to live in this World as long as God shall please, and do not think, Oh that I were delivered from all these afflictions and troubles here in this World! if thou wert, then thou shouldest have more ease to thy self: but here's a way of honouring God, and manifesting the excellency of Grace here when thou art in this conflict of temptation, that God shall not have from thee in Heaven, and therefore be satisfied and

quiet,

quiet, be contented with thy Contentment: I want such and such things that others have, but blessed be God, I have a contented heart that others have not, then I say, be content with thy Contentment, for that's a rich portion that the Lord hath granted unto thee: if the Lord should give unto thee thousands here in this world, it would not be such a rich portion as this, that he hath given thee a contented spirit: Oh, go away, and praise the name of God, and say, Lord, it's true, these and these comforts that others have, I should be glad if I had them, but thou hast cut me short: but though I want these, yet thou hast given me that that is good and better, thou hast given me a quiet contented heart, to be willing to be at thy disposse.

SERMON VII. *At* Stepney, *Sept.* 7. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

WE proceed now; There are some two or three things more of the excellency of Contentment, and then we are to proceed to Application of the Point.

The eighth excellency is, *Contentment is a great blessing of God upon the soul.* There is Gods blessing upon those that are content, the blessing of God is upon them and their estates, and upon all that they have. We read in *Deut.* of the blessing of *Judah* the principal Tribe: this is the blessing of *Judah*, *And he said, hear Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people, let his hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his Enemies.* Let his hand be

be sufficient for him, that is bring in a sufficiency of all the good unto him that he may have of his own, that is the blessing of *Judah*. So when God gives thee a sufficiency of thine own, (as every contented man hath) there is a blessing of God upon thee, the blessing of the principal Tribe of *Judah* is upon thee: It is the Lord that gives us all things to enjoy, we may have the thing, and yet not enjoy it except God come in with his blessing; now whatsoever thou hast, thou dost enjoy it: Many men have estates, and do not enjoy them: it is the blessing of God that gives us all things to enjoy, it is God that through his blessing, hath fashioned thy heart and made it futable to thy condition.

The ninth Excellency, *Those that are content, they may expect reward from God, that God shall give unto them the good of all those things that they are contented to be without*, and this brings in abundance of good to a contented spirit; There is such and such a mercy that thou thinkest would be very comfortable unto thee if thou hadst it; but canst thou bring thy heart to submit to God in it; thou shalt have the blessing of the mercy one way or other; if thou hast not the thing it self *in re*, thou shalt have it made one way or other; thou shalt have a Bill of exchange to receive somewhat in lieu of it: there is no comfort that any soul is content to be without, but the Lord will give either the comfort, or somwhat instead of it: Thou shalt have a reward to thy soul for what ever good thing thou art content to be without. You know what the Scripture saith of active obedience, and the Lord doth accept (of his Servants) their will for the deed though we do not do a good thing, yet if our hearts be upright, to will to do it, we shall have the blessing, though we do not do the thing: You that complain of weakness, you cannot do as others do, you cannot do as much service as others do, if your hearts be upright with God, and would fain do the same service that you see others do; you would account it a great blessing of God upon you, the greatest blessing in the World, if you were able to do as others do; now you may comfort your selves with this, having to deal with God in the way of the Covenant of Grace, you shall have from God the reward of all you would do; as a wicked man

shall

shall have punishment for all the sin he would commit, so thou shalt have the reward for all the good thou wouldst do. Now, may we not draw an argument from active obedience to passive? There is a good reason why thou shouldst expect that God will reward thee for all thou art willing to suffer, as well as for all that thou art willing to do; now if thou beest willing to be without such a comfort and mercy when God sees it fit, thou shalt be no loser; certainly, God will reward thee either with the comfort, or with that that shall be as good to thee as the comfort: therefore consider, how many things have I that others want? and can I bring my heart into a quiet contented frame to want what others have? I have the blessing of all that they have, and I shall either possess such things as others have, or else God will make it upone way or other, either here, or hereafter in eternity to me: Oh! what riches are here! with Contentment thou hast all kind of riches.

Tenthly and lastly, *By Contentment the soul comes to an Excellency neer unto God himself, yea, the neerest that may be*; for this word that is translated *Content*, is a word that signifies a *Self-sufficiency*, (as I told you in the opening of the words. A contented man is a self-sufficient man. What is the great Glory of God, but to be happy and self-sufficient of himself! Indeed, he is said to be All-sufficient, but that's but a further addition, of the word *All*, rather than of any matter; for to be Sufficient, is All-sufficient. Now, is this the Glory of God, to be Sufficient, to have Sufficiency in himself, *El shaddai*, to be God, having Sufficiency in himself? Now thou comest neer to this thou partakest of the Divine Nature, as by Grace in general so in a more peculiar manner by this Grace of *Christian Contentment*, what is the Excellency and Glory of God, but this? Suppose there were no creatures in the world, & that all the creatures in the World were annihilated, God would remain the same blessed God that he is now, he would not be in a worse condition, if all creatures were gone, neither would a contented heart, if God should take away all creatures from him; a contented heart hath enough in the want of all creatures, & would not be more miserable than now he is; Suppose that God should continue thee here, & all creatures that are here in this World were taken

ken away, yet thou ſtill (having God to be thy portion) wouldſt be as happy as now thou art, and therefore Contentation hath a great deal of Excellency in it.

Thus we have ſhewed in many particulars, the excellency of this Grace, labouring to preſent the beauty of it before your ſouls, that you may be in love with it.

Now my brethren, what remains but the practiſe of this: for this Art of Contentment, it's not a ſpeculative thing, only for contemplation, but it is an art of Divinity, and therefore practical; ye are now to la our to work upon your hearts, that there may be this Grace in you, that you may honour God, and honour your profeſſion with this Grace of Contentment; for there is none doth more honour God, and honour their profeſſion, than thoſe that have this Grace of Contentment. Now, that we may fall upon the practiſe, there is required;

Firſt, *That we ſhould be humbled in our hearts for the want of this, that we have had ſo little of this Grace in us.* For there is no way to ſet upon any duty with profit, till the heart be humbled for the want of the performance of the duty before; many men when they hear of a duty they ſhould perform, they will labour to perform it, but firſt thou muſt be humbled for the want of it therefore that's the thing that I ſhall endeavour in the Application, to get your hearts to be humbled for the want of this Grace; Oh had I this Grace of Contentment, what a happy life I might have lived? what abundance of honour I might have brought to the name of God, and how might I have honoured my profeſſion? and what a deal of comfort might I have enjoyed, but the Lord knows it hath been far otherwiſe; Oh, how far have I been from this Grace of Contentment that hath been opened to me? I have had a murmuring, a vexing, and fretting heart within me, every little croſs hath put me out of temper, and out of frame: Oh, the boiſterouſneſs of my ſpirit, what a deal of evil doth God ſee in my heart, in the vexing and fretting of my heart, and murmuring and repining of my ſpirit? Oh, that God would make you to ſee it: Now, to the end that you might be humbled for the want of this, I ſhall endeavour in theſe particulars to ſpeak unto it.

Firſt

First, I ſhall ſet before you, *The evil of a murmuring ſpirit, there is more evil than you are aware of.*

In the ſecond place, *I will ſhew you ſome aggravations of this evil,* It's evil in all, but in ſome more than in others.

Thirdly, *I ſhall labour to take away the Pleas that any murmuring diſcontented heart hath for this diſtemper of His.*

There's theſe Three things in this Uſe of Humiliation of the ſoul for want of this Grace of Contentment.

For the firſt, now at this time. The great evil that there is in a murmuring diſcontented heart.

In the firſt place, *This thy murmuring and diſcontentedneſs, it argues much corruption that is in the ſoul*; as Contentments argues much Grace, and ſtrong Grace, and beautiful Grace; ſo this argues much Corruption, and ſtrong Corruption, and very vile Corruption in thy heart. As it is in a mans body, If a mans body be of that temper, that every ſcratch of a pin makes his fleſh to ranckle, and to be a ſore, you will ſay, ſurely this mans body is very corrupt, his blood and fleſh is corrupt, that every ſcratch of a pin ſhall make it rankle; ſo it is in thy ſpirit; if every little trouble and affliction ſhall make thee diſcontented, and make thee murmur, and even cauſe thy ſpirit within thee to rankle; or as it is in a wound of a mans body, the evil of a wound, it is not ſo much in the largeneſs of the wound, & in the abundance of blood that comes out of the wound, but in the inflammation that there is in it, or in a fretting and corroding humor that is in the wound; an unskilfull man when he comes and ſees a large wound in the fleſh, looks upon it as a dangerous wound, and when he ſees a great deal of blood guſh out, he thinks theſe are the evils of it, but when a Chirurgion comes and ſees a great gaſh, ſaith he, this will be healed within a few days; but there's a leſs wound, and there's an inflammation or a fretting humor that is in it, and this will coſt time (ſaith he) to cure, ſo that he doth not lay Balſom and healing Salves upon it, but his great care is to get out the fretting humor or inflammation, ſo that the thing that muſt heal this wound, it is ſome drink to purge; But (ſaith the patient) what good will this do to my wound? You give me ſomewhat to drink, and my wound is in my arm, or in my leg, what good will this

do

do that I put in my ſtomach? Yea; it purges out the fretting humor, or takes away the inflammation, and till that be taken away, the ſalves can do no good. So it is juſt for all the world in the ſouls of men, it may be there is ſome affliction upon them that I compare to the wound; now they think that the greatneſs of the affliction is that which makes their condition moſt miſerable: Oh no, there is a fretting humor and inflammation in the heart, a murmuring ſpirit that is within thee, and that is the miſery of thy condition, and that muſt be purged out of thee before thou canſt be healed, and let God do with thee what he will, till he purges out that fretting humor, thy wound will not be healed; a murmuring heart is a very ſinful heart ſo that when thou art troubled for ſuch an affliction, thou hadſt need turn thy thoughts, rather to be troubled for the murmuring of thy heart, for that is the greateſt trouble; there is an affliction upon thee, & that is more grievous, but there is a murmuring heart within, and that is more grievous. Oh that we could but convince men and women that a murmuring ſpirit is a greater evil than any affliction, let the affliction be what it will be. We ſhall ſhew more afterward, that a murmuring ſpirit is the evil of the evil, and the miſery of the miſery.

Secondly, *The evil of a murmuring is ſuch, that God when he would ſpeak of wicked men, and deſcribe them, and ſhew the brand of a wicked ungodly man or woman, he inſtances in this ſin in a more ſpecial manner*: I might name many Scriptures, but that Scripture in *Jude* is a moſt remarkable one, in the 14. verſe, and ſo forward, there it is ſaid *That the Lord comes with ten thouſands of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him.* Mark here in this 15 verſe, there is four times mentioned ungodly ones; All that are *ungodly* among them, all their *ungodly* deeds which they have *ungodly* committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which *ungodly* ſinners have ſpoken againſt him: This is in the general. But now he comes in the particular to ſhew who theſe are (ſaith he) Murmurers; that is the very firſt. Would you know who are ungod-

ungodly men, that God, when he comes with ten thousand of Angels shall come to punish for all their ungodly deeds that they do, & those that speak ungodly things against them. These ungodly ones are Murmurers, Murmurers in the Scripture are put in the fore-front of ungodly ones; it is a most dreadful Scripture, that the Lord, when he speaks of ungodly ones, puts Murmurers in the very fore-front of all; you had need look to your Spirits, you may see that this Murmuring, which is the vice contrary to this Contentment, is not so small a matter as you think: you think you are not so ungodly as others, because you do not swear and drink as others, do, but you may be ungodly in Murmuring: it is true, there is no sin but seeds and remainders of it are in those that are Godly, but when they are under the power of this sin of Murmuring, it doth convince them to be ungodly, as well as if they were under the power of drunkenness. or whoredom, or any other sin, God will look upon you as ungodly for this sin, as well as for any sin whatsoever. This one Scripture should make the heart shake at the thought of the sin of Murmuring.

Thirdly, As it is made a brand of ungodly men, so you shall find in Scripture *that Gods counts it Rebellion*, that is contrary to the worship that there was in contentedness; that is worshipping of God crouching to God and falling down before him, even as a dog that would crouch when you hold a staff over him. but a Murmuring heart it is a rebellious heart, and that you shall find if you compare two Scriptures together, they are both in Book of *Num.* 16. 14. *But on the morrow* (saith the Text) *all the Congregation of the Children of Israel murmured against* Moses *and against* Aaron, *saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord*; They all murmured; now compare this with *Ch.* 17. and v. 10. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aarons rod again, before the testimony to be kept for a token against the Rebels*. In the 16. *Ch.* they murmured against *Moses* and *Aaron*, and in the 17. *Ch.* bring the Rod of *Aaron* again, before the testimony, for a token against the *Rebels*. So that to be a Murmerer, and to be a Rebel you see in Scripture phrase is all one, it is a rebellion against God: as it is the beginning of rebellion and sedition in a Kingdom when the people are discontent,

and when diſcontentment comes it grows to murmuring, and you can go into no houſe almoſt, but there is murmuring when men are diſcontent, ſo that within a little while it breaks forth into Sedition or Rebellion. Murmuring it is but as the ſmoak of a fire, there is firſt a ſmoak and ſmother before the flame breaks forth, and ſo before open Rebellion in a Kingdom there is firſt a ſmoak of Murmuring, and then it breaks forth into open Rebellion; but becauſe it hath Rebellion in the ſeeds of it, therefore it is accounted before the Lord to be Rebellion. Wilt thou be a Rebel againſt God? When thou feeleſt thy heart diſcontented and murmuring againſt the diſpenſations of God towards thee, thou ſhouldeſt check thy heart thus, Oh thou wretched heart, what wilt thou be a Rebel againſt God? wilt thou riſe in a way of Rebellion againſt the infinite God? yet thus thou haſt done, charge thy heart with this ſin of rebellion, you that are guilty of this ſin of Murmuring, you are this day by the Lord charged as being guilty of Rebellion againſt him, and God expects that when you go home you ſhould humble your Souls before him for this ſin, that you ſhould charge your Souls for being guilty of Rebellion againſt God: many of you may ſay, I never thought that I had been a Rebel againſt God before, I thought that I had many infirmities, but now I ſee the Scripture ſpeaks of ſin in another manner than men do, the Scripture makes men (though but Murmurers) to be Rebels againſt God: Oh this rebellious heart that I have againſt the Lord, that hath manifeſted its ſelf in this way of murmuring againſt the Lord. That is a Third particular in the evil of diſcontentment.

A fourth particular in the evil of Diſcontentment, *It is a wickedneſs that is exceeding contrary to Grace, and eſpecially contrary to the work of God, in bringing of the Soul home to himſelf*: I know no diſtemper more oppoſite and contrary to the Work of God in converſion of a ſinner, than this is.

Queſt. *What is the work of God when he brings a ſinner home to himſelf?*

Anſw. The uſual way is for God to make the Soul to ſee and be ſenſible of the dreadful evil that there is in ſin, and the great breach that ſin hath made between God and it, for certainly

tainly Jesus Christ can never be known in his beauty and excellency till the know that. I do not speak what secret work of the Holy Ghost there may be in the Soul, but before the Soul can actually apply Jesus Christ to it's self, it is impossible but it must come to know the evil of sin, and the excellency of Jesus Christ: there may be a seed of faith put into the Soul, but the Soul must first know Christ, and know sin, and be made sensible of it. Now how contrary is this sin of murmuring to any such work of God? hath God made me see the dreadfull evil of sin, and made my soul to be sensible of the evil of sin, as the greatest burden? how can I then be so much troubled for every little affliction? Certainly if I saw what the evil of sin was, that sight would swallow up all other evils, and if I were burdened with the evil of sin, it would swallow up all other burdens; what am I now murmuring against God's hand (saith such a soul) when as a while ago the Lord made me see my self to be a damned wretch, and apprehended it as a wonder that I am not in Hell?

2. Yea, it is mighty contrary to the sight of the infinite excellency and Glory of Jesus Christ, and the things of the Gospel. What am I that Soul that the Lord hath discovered such infinite Excellency of Jesus Christ to? and yet what shall I think such a little affliction to be so grievous to me, when I have had the sight of such glory in Christ that is more worth than ten thousand worlds? (for so will a true convert say) O! the Lord at such a time hath given me the sight of Christ that I would not be without for ten thousand thousand worlds; but hath God given thee that; and wilt thou be discontent for a trifle in comparison of that?

3. A Third work, when Gods brings the Soul home to himself, it is, *By taking the heart off from the Creature; the disingaging the heart from all Creature-comforts*: That is the Third work ordinarily that the Soul may perceive of its self. It is true, Gods Work may be altogether in the seeds in him; but in the several actings of the Soul in turning to God it may perceive these things in it, the disingagement of the heart from the Creature, that is the calling off the Soul from the world, *Whom the Lord hath called, he hath justified*: what is the calling of the

Soul but this, the Soul that was before seeking for Contentment in the world, and cleaving to the Creature, now the Lord calls the Soul out of the world, and saith, Oh Soul, thy happiness is not here, thy rest is not here, thy happiness is elsewhere, and thy heart must be loosed from all these things that are here below in the world; and this is the work of God in the Soul to disingage the heart from the Creature, and how contrary is a murmuring heart to such a thing! a thing that is glued to another you cannot take off, but you must rend it; to it is a sign thy heart is glued to the world, that when God would take thee off, thy heart rends: if God by an affliction should come to take any thing in the world from thee, if thou canst part from it with ease without rending, it is a sign then that thy heart is not glued to the world.

4. A Fourth work of God in converting of a sinner, is this, *The casting the Soul upon Jesus Christ for all it is good*: I see Jesus Christ in the Gospel the Fountain of all Good, and God out of free Grace tendering him to me for life, and for salvation, and now my Soul casts it self, rouls it self upon the infinite Grace of God in Christ for all good; now hast thou done so? hath God converted thee, and drawn thee to his Son to cast thy Soul upon him for all thy good, and yet thou discontented for the want of some little matter in a Creature-comfort? Art thou he that hast cast thy Soul upon Jesus Christ for all good? as he saith in another case, Is this thy Faith?

5. *The Soul is subdued to God*; and then it comes to receive Jesus Christ as a King, to rule, to order and dispose of him how he pleases, and so the heart is subdued unto God. Now how opposite is a murmuring discontented heart to a heart subdued to Jesus Christ as a King, and receiving him as a Lord to rule and dispose of him as he pleases.

6. There is in the work of thy turning to God the giving up of thy self to God in an everlasting Covenant; as thou takest Christ the Head of the Covenant to be thine, so thou givest up thy self to Christ; In the Work of Conversion, there is the resignation of the Soul wholly to God in an everlasting Covenant to be his: hast thou ever surrendred up thy self to God in an everlasting Covenant? then certainly this thy fretting, murmuring

muring heart is mighty opposite to it, certainly thou forgettest this Covenant of thine, and the Resignation of thy self up to God; It would be a marvellous help to you, to humble your Souls when you are in a murmuring condition, if you could but obtain so much liberty of your own Spirits, as to look back to see what the work of God was in converting you, there is nothing would prevail more then to think of that. I am now in a murmuring discontented way, But how did I feel my soul working when God did turn my soul to himself? Oh how opposite is this to that work, and how unbeseeming? Oh what shame and confusion would come upon the Spirits of men and women, if they could but compare the work of corruption in their murmuring and discontent, with the work of God that was upon their souls in Conversion? Now we should labour to keep the work of God upon our Souls that was at our Conversion; for Conversion must not be only at one instant at first; men are deceived in this, if they think their Conversion is finished meerly at first, thou must be in a way of Conversion to God all the days of thy life, and therefore Christ saith to his Disciples, *Except ye be converted and become as little Children: Ye be converted*: Why were they not converted before? Yes, they were converted, but they were to continue the work of Conversion all the days of their lives, and what work of God there is at the first Conversion, it is to abide afterwards. As thus, Always there must abide some sight or sense of sin, it may be not in the way which you had, which was rather a preparation than any thing else; but the sight and sense of sin it is to continue still, that is, you are still to be sensible of the burthen of sin, as it is against the Holiness and Goodness and Mercy of God unto thee, and the sight of the excellency of Jesus Christ is to continue, and thy Calling out of the Creature, and the Casting thy Soul upon Christ as a King, still receive him day by day; and the subduing of thy heart, and the Surrrendring of thy self up to God in the way of Covenant; now if this were but daily continued, there would be no place, nor time for Murmuring to work upon thy heart. That is the fourth Particular.

The Fifth thing is the evil of Discontentment, *Murmuring and*

and discontentment is exceeding below a Christian; Oh! it is too mean and base a distemper for a Christian to give place to it. Now it is below a Christian in many respects.

1. How below the relation of a Christians; The relation to which thou standest. With what relation (you will say?)

First, The relation thou standest in to God: dost not thou call God thy Father? and dost not thou stand in relation to him as a Child? what thou murmurer! In *2 Sam.* 13. 5. it is a Speech of *Jonadab* to *Ammon*, *Why art thou, being the Kings Son, lean from day to day, wilt thou not tell me?* and so he told him; (but that was for a wicked cause) he perceived that his Spirit was troubled, for otherwise he was of a fat and plump temper of body, but because of trouble of spirit he was even pined away, why what is the matter? thou that standest in this relation to the King, and yet any thing should trouble thy heart, (that is his meaning) is there any thing that should disquiet thy heart and yet standest in such a relation to the King, the King's Son? So I may say to a Christian, Art thou the Kings Son, the Son, the Daughter of the King of Heaven, and yet so disquieted and troubled, and vext at every little thing that falls out? as if a Kings Son should cry out, he is undone for losing a bable, what an unworthy thing were this? So dost thou, thou criest out as if thou wert undone, and yet a Kings Son, thou that standest in such relation to God as unto a Father, thou doest dishonour thy Father in this; and if so be either he had not wisdom, or not power, or not mercy enough to be provide for thee.

2. *The relation that thou standest in to Jesus Christ, thou art the Spouse of Christ?* what! one married to Jesus Christ, and yet troubled and discontented. Hast thou not enough in him? doth not Christ say to his Spouse, as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, (*1 Sam.* 1. 8.) *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons?* So doth not Christ thy Husband say to thee, Am not I better to thee than thousands of riches & comforts? such comforts as thou murmurest for want of, hath not God given thee his *Son*? and will he not with him give thee all things? hath the love of God been to thee to give thee his Son in way of Marriage? why art thou discontented and murmuring? consider thy relation to Jesus Christ

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as thou art a Spouſe and married to him, his Perſon is thine, and ſo all the riches of Jeſus Chriſt are thine; as the riches of a Husband are the wives, and though there are ſome Husbands ſo vile as the wives may be forced to ſue for maintenance, certainly Jeſus Chriſt will never deny maintenance to his Spouſe: it is a diſhonour for a Husband to have his Wife go whining up and down; what, thou art matched with Chriſt and art his Spouſe, and wilt thou murmur now and be diſcontented in thy Spirits? You ſhall obſerve among thoſe that are newly matched, when there is diſcontent between the Wife and Husband, their friends will ſhake their heads and ſay, they do not meet with that that they did expect, ye ſee ever ſince they were married together, how the man looks, and the woman looks, they are not ſo cheery as they were wont to be, ſurely (ſay they) it is like to prove an ill match. But it is not ſo here, it ſhall not be ſo between thee and Chriſt: Oh Jeſus Chriſt doth not love to ſee his Spouſe to have a lowring countenance: no man loves to ſee diſcontentment in the face of his Wife, ſurely Chriſt doth not love to ſee diſcontentment in the face of his Spouſe.

3. *Thou ſtandeſt in relation to Chriſt* not only as a Spouſe, but as a *Member, Thou art bone of his bone and fleſh of his fleſh*; and to have a Member of Jeſus Chriſt to be in ſuch a condition, it is exceeding unworthy.

4. *He is thy Elder Brother likewiſe, and ſo thou art a Coheir with him.*

5. *The Relation that thou ſtandeſt in to the Spirit of God,* Thou art the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, the Holy Ghoſt is thy Comforter, it is he that is appointed to convey all comfort from the Father and the Son, to the Souls of his people. And art thou the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and doth he dwell in thee, and yet for all that thou murmureſt for every little matter?

6. *The Relation that thou ſtandeſt in to the Angels, thou art made one body with them*; for ſo Chriſt hath joyned principalities and powers with his Church, they are Miniſtring Spirits for good to his people, to ſupply what they need, and thou, & they are joyned together, and Chriſt is the head of you and Angels.

7. *The Relation that you Stand in to the Saints, you are of the ſame body with them,* they & you make up but one myſtical body with

with Jesus Christ; and if they be happy you must needs be happy; Oh how beneath a Christian is a Murmuring Spirit, if he considers his Relations in which he stands!

Secondly, A Christian should consider, *That murmuring & Discontentedness is below the high Dignities that God hath put upon him:* Do but consider the high Dignity that God hath put upon thee; the meanest Christian in the world is a Lord of Heaven and Earth; he hath made us Kings unto himself, Kings unto God, not Kings unto men to rule over them, and yet I say every Christian is a Lord of Heaven and Earth, yea of life and death. That is, As Christ he is a Lord of all, so he hath made those that are his Members to be Lords of all, *All are yours* saith the Apostle, even life and death every thing is yours. It is a very strange expression, that death should be theirs: Death is yours, that is, you are as it were Lords over it, you have that that shall make death to be your servant, your slave, even death it self, your greatest enemies are turned to be your slaves. Faith makes a Christian to be as Lord over all, to be lifted up in excellency above all creatures that ever God made, except the Angels; yea and in some respect above them, I say, the poorest Christian that lives is raised to an estate above all the Creatures in the world, except Angels; yea, and above them in divers respects too, and yet discontented, that thou who wert to be a firebrand of Hell, and might have been scorching and yelling and roaring there to all eternity, yet that God should raise thee to have a higher excellency in thee than there is in all the works of the Creation that ever he made, except Angels; and other Christians that are in thy condition; yea, and thou art nearer the Divine Nature than the Angels, because thy nature is joyned in an hypostatical union to the Divine Nature, and in that respect thy nature is more honoured than the nature of the Angels. And the Death of Christ is thine, he died for thee, and not for the Angels; and therefore thou art like to be raised above the Angels, in divers respects: yea, thou art in such an estate as this is, thou that art set apart to the end that God might manifest to all eternity what the infinite power of a Deity is able to raise a Creature too: for that is the condition of a Saint, a Believer, his condition is such as he is set apart to the

end

end that God might manifeſt to all eternity what his infinite power is able to do to make the Creature happy; art thou in ſuch a condition? Oh! how low and beneath this condition is a murmuring and diſcontented heart, for want of ſome outward comforts here in this world; How unſeemingly is it that thou ſhouldſt be a ſlave to every croſs, that every affliction ſhall be able to ſay to thy ſoul, Bow down to us: We accounted that a great ſlavery, when men ſhould ſay to our Souls, Bow down: As the cruel Papiſts were wont to do in impoſing things upon Mens Conſciences, they did in effect ſay, Let your Conſciences, your Souls bow down to us, that we may tread upon them; that is the greateſt ſlavery in the world, that one man ſhould ſay to another, let your conſciences, your Souls bow down that we may tread upon them; but wilt thou ſuffer every affliction to ſay, Bow down that we may tread upon thee? Truly, it is ſo, when thy heart is overcome with murmuring and diſcontent: Know that thoſe afflictions which have cauſed thee to murmur, have ſaid to thee, Bow down that we may tread upon thee; nay, not afflictions, but the very devil doth prevail againſt you in this: Oh! how beneath is this to the happy eſtate that God hath raiſed a Chriſtian unto! What! the Son of a King, ſhall he have every baſe fellow to come and bid him bow down that he may tread upon his neck? thus doſt thou in every affliction: the affliction, the croſs, and trouble that doth befal thee, ſaith, Bow down that we may come and tread upon thee.

Thirdly, *Murmuring it is below the ſpirit of a Chriſtian*; Below his Spirit, the ſpirit of every Chriſtian ſhould be like the ſpirit of his father, every father loves to ſee his ſpirit in his child, loves to ſee his language, not his Image of his body only, to ſay, here is a child for all the world like the father, but he hath the ſpirit of his father too: a father that is a man of ſpirit, Loves to ſee his ſpirit in his child, rather than the feature of his Body; Oh the Lord that is our Father, loves to ſee his ſpirit in us; Great men love to ſee great Spirits in their children: and the great God loves to ſee a great Spirit in his children; we are one Spirit with God, and with Chriſt, and one Spirit with the Holy Ghoſt, therefore we ſhould have a Spirit that might manifeſt the Glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt in our ſpi-

rits; that is the Spirit of a Christian indeed. The Spirit of a Christian should be a Lion-like Spirit as Jesus Christ is the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* (so he is called) so we should manifest somewhat of the Lion-like Spirit of Jesus Christ; he manifested his Lion-like Spirit in passing through all afflictions and troubles whatsoever, without any murmuring against God. When he came to drink that Bitter Cup, and even the dregs of it, he prayed to God (indeed) that if it were possible it might pass from him, but presently, *Not my will, but thy will be done*; As soon as ever he did mention the passing of the Cup from him (though it were the most dreadful Cup, that ever was drunk since the world began,) yet at the mentioning of it, *not my will but thy will be done*; here Christ shewed a Lion-like Spirit, in going through all kind of afflictions whatsoever without any murmuring against God in them: Now a murmuring Spirit is a base dejected Spirit, cross and contrary to the Spirit of a Christian, and it is very base. I remember that the Heathens account it very base, *Plutarch* doth report of a certain people, that did use to manifest their disdain to men that were over-much dejected by any affliction, they did condemn them to this punishment, To wear womens cloaths all their days, or such a space of time at least, they should go in womens cloaths, in token of shame and disgrace to them; because they had such effeminate spirits, they thought it against a man-like spirit, and therefore seeing they did un-man themselves they should go like women. Now shall they account it an un-man-like spirit, to be over-much dejected in affliction, and shall not a Christian account it an unchristianlike spirit to be over-much dejected by any affliction whatsoever? I remember another compares murmuring spirits, to Children when they are weaning, What a deal of stir have you with your children when you wean them? how froward and vexing are they? So when God would wean thee from some outward comforts in this world, O how fretting and discontented art thou! Children will not sleep themselves, nor let their Mothers sleep when they are weaning, and so when God would wean us from the world, and we fret, vex, and murmur, this is a childish spirit.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *It is below the profession of a Christian.* The profession of a Christian, what is that? A Christians profession is To be dead to the world, and to be alive to God, that is his profession, to have his life to be hid with Christ in God, to satisfie himself in God; What, is this thy profession? and yet if thou hast not every thing that thou would'st have, to murmur and be discontent, thou dost in that even deny thy profession.

Fifthly, *It is below that special Grace of Faith.* Faith is that that doth overcome the world, it is that that makes all the Promises of God to be ours; Now when thou tookest upon thee the profession of Religion, Did God ever promise thee that thou shouldst live at ease and quiet, and have no trouble? I remember S. *Austin* hath such an expression, What is this thy Faith? What did I ever promise thee (saith he) that thou shouldst ever flourish in the world? Art thou a Christian to that end? and is this thy Faith? I never made any such promise to thee when thou tookest upon thee to be a Christian: Oh, it is mighty contrary to thy profession, thou hast never a promise for this, that thou shouldest not have such an affliction upon thee: And a Christian should live by his Faith; it is said, that the just doth live by Faith now thou should'st not look after any other life but the life that thou hast by Faith; now thou hast no ground, for thy Faith, to believe that thou shouldst be delivered out of such an affliction; and then, why shouldest thou account it such a great evil to be under such an affliction? Certainly that good that we have in the ground for our Faith, it is enough to content our hearts, here and to all Eternity: A Christian should be satisfied with that that God hath made to be the Object of his Faith, the Object of his Faith is high enough to satisfie his Soul, were it capable of a thousand times more than it is; Now if thou mayest have the Object of thy Faith full, thou hast enough to content thy Soul: and know that when thou art discontented for want of such and such comforts, if thou wouldest but think thus, God did never promise me that I should have these comforts, and at this time, and in such a way as I would have, but I am discontented because I have not those which God did never yet promise me, and therefore His mind

against the Gospel, and against the Grace of Faith.

There is yet another thing, it is below the hopes of Christians: Oh the most glorious things that the Saints hope for.

And against the helps that Christians have: Christians have great helps that may help them against murmuring.

And it is against that which God expects from Christians. God expects other manner of things from them than this.

Yea, and it is below that that God hath from other Christians. These things I shall open at another time.

SERMON VIII. *At* Stepney, *Sept.* 21. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

I Mentioned divers things the last day to set out the evil of discontent; I shall name Two or Three more.

Sixthly, It is below a Christian in this, *Because it is below those helps that a Christian hath more than others have*; they have the Promises to help them that others have not; it is not so much to have a *Nabal* have his heart sink, because he hath nothing but the Creature to uphold him; but it is much for a Christian that hath Promises and Ordinances to uphold his spirit, which others have not.

Seventhly, *It is below the expectation that God hath of Christians*, for God expects not only that they should be patient in afflictions, but that they should rejoyce and triumph in them:

now, Christians, when God expects this from you, for you not so much as to have attained to contentedness under afflictions, Oh this is beneath the expectation of God from you.

Eighthly, *It is below that that God hath had from other Christians.* Others have not only been contented with little crosses, but they triumphed under great afflictions, they have suffered the spoiling of their goods with joy read but the later part of the 11 of the *Hebrews*, and you shall find what great things God hath had from his people, and therefore not to be content with smaller crosses, this must needs be a great evil.

The Sixth evil that there is in a murmuring spirit, is this, *By murmuring you undo your prayers, for it is exceeding contrary to the prayers you make unto God:* When you come to prayer to God, you acknowledge his Soveraignty over you, you come there to profess your selves to be at Gods dispose; what do you pray for except you acknowledge that you are at his dispose? except you will stand (as it were at his dispose never come to petition to him; if you will come to petition him, and yet will be your own carver, you go cross to your prayers, to come as if you would beg yonr bread at your Fathers gates every day, and yet you must do what you list, this is the undoing of the prayers of a Christian. I remember I have read of *Latimer*, that speaking concerning *Peter* that he denied his Master (saith he) *Peter* forgot his *Pater-noster*, for that was *Hallowed be thy Name*, and *thy Kingdom come:* So we may say, when you have murmuring and discontented hearts, you forget your prayers, you forget what you have prayed for, for you must make the Lords Prayer to be as a pattern for your prayers, though you say not always the same words: What do you pray, *But give us this day our daily bread?* for that is Christ's intention that we should have that as a pattern, and is a directory (as it were) how to make your prayers; now God doth not teach any of you to pray, Lord give us so much a year, or let me have such kind of cloath, and so many dishes at my Table, Christ doth not teach you to pray so, but he teaches us to pray, *Lord give us our bread*, shewing that you should be content with a little: What have you not bread to eat? I hope there is none of you here but have that.

Object.

Object. But I do not know if I should die what should become of my Children: Or if I have bread now, I know not where I shall have it next week, or where I shall have provision for the winter.

Answ. Where did Christ teach us to pray, Lord give us provision for so long a time? No, but if we have bread for this day, Christ would have us content: Therefore when we murmur because we have not so much variety as others have, we do (as it were) forget our *Paternoster*; It is against our Prayers, we do not in our lives hold forth the acknowledgement of the Sovereignty of God over us as we seem to acknowledge in our prayers; therefore when at any time you find your hearts murmuring, then do but reflect upon your selves and think thus, Is this according to my prayers, wherein I held forth the Soveraign Power and Authority that God hath over me?

The seventh thing that I add for the evil of discontentment, is, *The woful effects that come to a discontented heart from murmuring.* I'll name you five; There are five evils effects that come from a murmuring spirit.

1. *By murmuring and discontent in your hearts, you come to lose a great deal of time*; How many times do men and women when they are discontented let their thoughts run, and are musing and contriving through their present discontentedness, then let their discontented thoughts be working in them, for some hours together, and they spend their time in vain? When you are alone you should spend your time in holy meditation, but you are spending your time in discontented thoughts, you who complain that you cannot meditate, you cannot think on good things, but if you begin to think of them a little, presently your thoughts are off from them; but if you be discontented with any thing, then you can go alone, and muse, and roll things up and down in your thoughts to feed a discontented humor: Oh labour to see this evil effect of murmuring, the losing of your time.

2. *It doth unfit a man for duty*: A man or woman that is in a contented frame, you may turn such an one to any thing at any time, he is fit for to go to God at any time; but when one is in a discontented condition, than a man or woman is exceeding un-

unfit for the service of God. And it causes many distractions in duty, it unfits for duty, and when you come to perform duties, Oh the distractions that are in your duties, when your Spirits are discontented; when you hear of any ill news from Sea and cannot bear it, or of any ill from a friend, or any loss or cross. Oh what distractions do they cause in the performance of holy duties! When you should be in enjoying communion with God, you are distracted in your thoughts about the cross that hath befallen you; whereas had you but a quiet spirit, though there should great crosses befall you, yet they would never hinder you in the performance of any duty.

3. *Consider what wicked risings of heart, and resolution of spirit there are many times in a discontented fit.* In some discontented fits the heart rises against God, and against others, and (sometimes hath even desperate resolutions what to do to help themselves. If the Lord should have suffered you to have done, (sometimes in a discontented fit) what you had thought to do, what wonderfull misery had you brought upon your selves: Oh it was a mercy of God that did stop you; had not God stopt you, but let you go on when you thought to help your selves this way and the other way, Oh it had been ill with you, do but remember those risings of heart, and wicked resolutions that sometimes you have had in a discontented mood, and learn to be humbled upon that.

4. *Unthankfulness, that is an evil and a wicked effect that comes from discontent.* Unthankfulness the Scripture doth rank among very great sins. For men and women that are discontent, though they injoy many mercies from God, yet they are thankfull for none of them, for this is the vile nature of discontentment to lessen every mercy of God, to make those mercies they have from God to be as nothing to them, because they have not what they would have. Sometimes it is so even in spiritual things, if they have not all they would have, the comfort that they would have, then what they have is nothing to them, do you think that God will take this well? If you should give a friend, a Kinsman, a Purse of money to go and trade withal, and he should come and say, What do you give me?

me? they are but a few counters, they will do me no good: you cannot bear this at his hand if he should do so, because he hath not so much money as he would: So for you to be ready to say, All that God hath given me is nothing worth, will do me no good, they are but counters; though they are precious Graces of God's Spirit that are more worth than thousands of worlds, yet for you to say, they are nothing, they are but common gifts, and all is but in Hypocrisie, all counterfeit, Oh! what an unthankful thing is this! the Graces of Gods Spirit are nothing to a discontented heart, that hath not all that it would have; and so for outward blessings, though God hath given you health of Body, and strength, and hath given you some competency for your family, some way of livelihood, yet because you are disappointed in somewhat that you would have, therefore all is nothing unto you; Oh! what unthankfulness is here? God expects that every day you should spend some time in blessing his Name for what mercy he hath granted unto you: there is not any one of you who are in the lowest condition, but you have abundance of mercies to bless God for, but discontentedness makes them nothing. It is an excellent speech that I remember *Luther* hath, (saith he) This is the Rhetorick of the Spirit of God, (it is a very fine speech of his) to extenuate evil things, and to amplifie good things; if there falls out a cross to make the cross, to be but little; but if there be a mercy, to make the mercy to be great; as thus, if there be a cross, if the Spirit of God prevails in thy heart, such a man or woman will wonder that it is no greater, and will bless God, that though there be such a cross, yet that is no more; that is the work of the Spirit of God: and if there be a mercy, wonders at God's goodness that God granted so great a mercy: The Spirit of God extenuates evils and crosses, & doth magnifie and amplify all mercies, and makes all mercies seem to be great, and all afflictions seem to be little. But (saith he) the Devil goes quite contrary the Rhetorick of the Devil is quite otherwise, he doth lessen Gods mercies, and amplifie evil things, as thus, A godly man wonders at his cross that it is no more, a wicked man wonders his cross is so much, Oh (saith he) none was ever so afflicted as I am! If there be a cross, the Devil puts the foul

upon

upon musing on it, and making it greater than it is, and so it brings discontent: And then on the other side, if there be a mercy, then it is the Rhetorick of the Devil to lessen the mercy, Indeed (saith he) the thing is a good thing, but what is it? it is no great matter, and for all this I may be miserable. Thus the Rhetorick of Satan doth lessen God's mercies, and doth encrease afflictions: And for this I'll give you a notable example that we have in Scripture, it is the example of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, in *Num.* 16. 12, 13. *And* Moses *sent to call* Dathan *and* Abiram *the sons of* Eliab; *which said, we will not come up. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a Land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thy self altogether a Prince over us?* Mark, they slighted the Land that they were going into, the Land of *Canaan*, that was the Land that God promised them that should flow with milk and honey: But mark here their discontentedness, because they met with some troubles in the wilderness, O it was to slay them, they made their affliction in the wilderness to be greater than it was, O it was to kill them, tho' it were indeed to carry them to the Land of *Canaan*. But now their deliverance from Egypt though it was a great mercy, they made that mercy to be nothing, for say they, You have brought us out of a Land that floweth with milk & honey, what Land was that? it was the Land of Egypt, the Land of their bondage, but they call it a Land that flowed with milk & honey, though it were the Land of their most cruel and unsupportable bondage; whereas they should have blessed God as long as they had liv'd for Gods delivering them out of the Land of Egypt, yet meeting with some cross they make their deliverance from Egypt no mercy, no, it was rather a misery to them, Oh say they, Egypt was a Land that flowed with milk and honey! Oh what baseness is there in a discontented spirit, a discontented spirit out of envy to Gods Grace will make mercies that are great to be little, yea to be none at all. Would one ever have thought that such a word should have come from the mouth of an Israelite that had been under bondage and cried under it, and yet when they met with a little cross in their way to say you have brought us

out of the Land that floweth with milk and honey, to say, they were better before than now, and yet before they could not be contented neither; this is the usual unthankful expression of a discontented heart: Oh let us take heed of this, of a discontented heart, there is this woful cursed fruit of discontent, to make men and women unthankful for all the mercies God hath granted to them, and this is a sore and grevious evil.

And lastly, *There is this evil effect in murmuring, It causes shiftings of spirit*: They that murmur and are discontent, are liable to temptations, to shift for themselves in sinful and ungodly ways, discontent is the ground of shifting courses and unlawful ways. How many of you may have your consciences condemn you of this, that you in the time of your afflictions have sought to shift for your selves by ways that have been sinful aginst God, and your discontent was the bottom and ground of it? If you would avoid shiftings for your selves by wicked ways, labour to mortifie this sin of discontent, to mortifie it at the root.

The eight evil there is in murmuring and discontent is this, *There is a great deal of folly, extream folly in a discontented heart, it is a foolish sin.* I shall open the folly of it in many Particulars.

1. *It takes away the present comforts of what you have because you have not somewhat that you would have.* What a foolish thing is this, that because I have not what I would have, I will not enjoy the comfort of what I have: do not you account this folly in your children, you give them some victuals and they are not contented, perhaps (they say) it is not enough, they cry for more, and if you not presently give them more they will throw away that they have, and though you account that folly in your Children, yet you deal thus with God; God gives you many mercies, but you see others have more mercies than you and therefore you cry for more; but God gives you not what you would have, and upon that you throw away what you have, Is not this folly in your hearts; It is unthankfulness.

2. There is a great deal of folly in discontentment, for by all your

your discontent you cannot help your selves, you cannot get any thing by it. Who can by taking any carking care *add one cubit to his Stature, or make one hair that is white to be black?* You may vex and trouble your selves, but you can get nothing by it. Do you think that the Lord will come in a way of mercy ever a whit the sooner because of the murmuring of your spirits? Oh no, but mercy will be rather deferred the longer for it; though the Lord were before in a way of mercy, yet this distemper of your hearts were enough to put him out of his course of mercy, and though he had thoughts that you should have the thing before, yet now you shall not have it. If you had a mind to give such a thing to your child, yet if you see him in a discontented fretting way, you will not give it him; and this is the very reason why there are so many mercies denied to you, because of your discontentment, you are discontented for want of them, and therefore you have them not, you do deprive your selves of the enjoyment of your own desires because of this discontentent of your hearts, because you have not your desires, And is not this a foolish thing?

3. There is a great deal of folly in this, *There are many foolish carriages commonly that a discontented heart is guilty of: They carry themselves foolishly towards God and towards men*, there are such expressions, and such kind of behaviour comes from them, as makes their friends to be ashamed of them many times; their carriages are unseemly, they are a shame to themselves and their friends.

4. *There is a great deal of folly in discontent and murmuring: for it doth eat out the good sweetness of a mercy before it comes.* If God should give a mercy that we are discontented for the want of; yet the blessing of the mercy is as it were eaten out before we come to have it. Discontent is like a worm that eats the meat out of the Nut, and then when the meat is eaten out of it, then you shall have the shell. If a child should cry for a Nut that hath the meat eaten out, or all worm-eaten, what good would the child have by having the Nut? so such an outward comfort you would fain have, and you are troubled for the want of it, but the very trouble of your spirits is the worm that

eats out the blessing of the mercy, and then perhaps God gives it you, but gives it you with a curse mixed with it, that you were better not to have, than have it. That man or woman that is discontented for want of some good thing, if God doth give that good thing to them, before they be humbled of their discontent that did proceed from them, such a man or woman can have no comfort of the mercy, but it will be rather an evil than a good to them: and therefore for my part if I should have a friend or brother, or one that were as dear to me as my own soul, that I should see discontented for the want of such a comfort, I should rather pray, Lord keep this thing from them, till thou wilt be pleased to humble their hearts for their discontent, let not them have the mercy till they come to be humbled for their discontent for the want of it, for if they have it before that time they will have it without any blessing: And therefore it should be your care when you find your hearts discontented for want of any thing, to be humbled for it; thinking thus with your selves, Lord if that that I do so immoderately desire should come to me before I be humbled for my discontent for want of it, I am certain I can have no comfort of it, but I shall rather have it as an affliction to me. Many things which you desire as your lives, & think that you should be happy if you had them, yet when they do come you find not such happiness in them, but they prove to be the greatest crosses and afflictions to you that ever you had, and upon this ground, because your hearts were immoderately set upon them before you had them. As it was with *Rachel*, she must have children or else she died; well, saith God, seeing you must, you shall have them, but though she had a child she died according to what she had said, *Give me children or else I dee*. So in regard of any other outward comforts, people may have the thing but oftentimes they have it so as it proves the heaviest cross to them that ever they had in all their lives, such a child as you were discontent for the want of it, it may be it was sick, and your hearts were out of temper for fear that you should lose it, and God restores it, but he restores it so as he make it a cross to your hearts all the days of your lives. One observes concerning *Manna*, when the people were content-

ed with their allowance that God allowed them, then it was very good, but when they would not be content with Gods allowance, but would gather more than God would have them; then (saith the text) there was worms in it: So when we are content with our conditions, and that which God disposes of us to be in, there is a blessing in it, then it is sweet to us; but if we must needs have more, and keep it longer than God should have us to have it, then there will be worms in it, and no good at all.

5. *There is a great deal of folly in discontentedness, for it makes our afflictions a great deal worse than otherwise they would be:* it no way removes our afflictions, nay, while they do continue they are a great deal the worse and heavier, for a discontented heart is a proud heart, and a proud heart will not pull down his sails when there comes a tempest and storm. If a Mariner, when a tempest and storm comes should be froward and would not pull down his sails, but is discontented with the storm, is his condition the better because he is discontented and will not pull down his sails? Will this help him? Just so it is for all the world with a discontented heart, a discontented heart is a proud heart, and he out of his pride is troubled with his affliction, and is not contented with Gods dispose, and so he will not pull down his spirit at all and make it bow to God in this condition in which God hath brought him; now is his condition the better because he will not pull down his spirit? No certainly abundantly worse a thousand to one but the tempest and storm overwhelms his soul. And thus you see what a great deal of folly there is in the sin of discontentment.

The Ninth evil of murmuring and discontentment is this, *There is a mighty deal of danger in the sin of discontentment, for it exceedingly provoketh the wrath of God:* it is a sin that doth much provoke God against his creature, we find most sad expressions in Scripture (and examples too) how God hath been provoked against many for their discontent; in Num. 11. you have a notable text, and one would think that that were enough for

to make you fear murmuring, in the 26. verſe, it is ſaid, *The Lord ſpeak unto* Moſes *and* Aaron *ſaying*, what did he ſay? *How long ſhall I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur againſt me?* How long ſhall I bear with them ſaith God, *This evil Congregation*; O that is an evil Congregation that murmurs againſt me; and how long ſhall I bear with them? they do murmur and they have murmured; as thoſe that have murmuring ſpirits and murmuring diſpoſitions, they will murmur again, and again, *How long ſhall I bear with this evil Congregation that murmur againſt me?* How juſtly may God ſpeak of many of you that are this morning before the Lord, How long ſhall I bear with this wicked man or woman that doth murmur againſt me, and hath uſually in the courſe of their lives murmured againſt me when any thing falls out otherwiſe than they would have it? And mark what follows after; *I have heard the murmuring of the Children of Iſrael*: You murmur, it may be others hear you not, nay, it may be you ſpeak not at all, or but half words, yet God hears the language of your murmuring hearts, and thoſe muttering ſpeeches and thoſe half words that come from you; And further obſerve in this verſe, how the Lord repeats the ſin of murmuring, *How long ſhall I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur againſt me?* Secondly, *I have heard their murmuring*; Thirdly *which they murmur againſt me: Murmur, Murmur, Murmur*, Three times in one verſe he repeats it; and this is to ſhew his indignation againſt the thing: When you expreſs indignation againſt a thing you will repeat it over again, and again now the Lord becauſe he would expreſs his indignation againſt this ſin, he repeats it over again, again, and again, and it follows in ver. 28. *Say unto them, as truly as I live ſaith the Lord, As ye have ſpoken in mine ears, ſo will I do to you.* Mark, God ſwears againſt a murmurer; ſometimes in your diſcontent: you will be ready to ſwear (it may be); do you ſwear in your diſcontent? So doth God ſwear againſt you for your diſcontent. And what was it that God would do unto them? *v.* 29. 30. *Doubleſs your carcaſſes, ſhall fall in the wilderneſs and you ſhall not come into the Land concerning which I ſware, to make you dwell therein:* as if God ſhould ſay, if I have any life in me, your lives ſhall go for it, as I live it ſhall coſt you your lives. A diſcon-

tented

tented murmuring fit of yours may coſt you your lives. You ſee how it provokes God, there is more evil in it than you are aware of, it may coſt you your lives, and therefore look in your ſelves, and learn to be humbled at the very beginnings of ſuch diſtempers in the heart. So in *Pſal.* 136. 24, 25. *Yea, they deſpiſed the Pleaſant Land, they believed not his word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord; therefore he lifted up his hand againſt them to overthrow them in the wilderneſs.* Here are divers things obſervable in this Scripture.

Firſt, That which we ſpoke to before, How a murmuring hearts doth ſlight Gods mercies, ſo it is here, *They deſpiſed the pleaſant Land*: and that a murmuring heart is contrary to faith, *they believed not his Word*, but (ſaith the text) *they murmured in their Tents and hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord.* Many men and women will hearken to the voice of their own baſe murmuring hearts, that will not hearken to the voice of the Lord; if you would hearken to the voice of the Lord there would not be ſuch murmuring as there is: but mark what follows upon it, you may not think to pleaſe your ſelves in your murmuring diſcontentedneſs, and think that no evil ſhall come of it; *Therefore he lifted up his hand againſt them to overthrow them*: you that are diſcontented, you lift up your hearts againſt God, and you cauſe God to lift up his hand againſt you, perhaps God lays his finger upon you ſoftly in ſome afflictions that are upon you in your families or elſewhere, and you cannot bear the hand of God that lies upon you as tenderly as a tender-hearted Nurſe that lays her hand upon the child, you cannot bear the tender hand of God that lies upon you in a leſſer affliction; it were juſt with God to lift up his hand againſt you in another manner of afflictions; Oh a murmuring ſpirit provokes God exceedingly. There is another place in *Numb* 16. Compare the 41. verſ. and the 46. ver. together, *But on the morrow all the Congregation of the Children of Iſrael murmured againſt* Moſes *and againſt* Aaron *ſaying, Ye, have killed the people of the Lord*: and mark in the 46. ver. *And* Moſes *ſaid unto* Aaron, *Take a Cenſer and put fire therein from off the Altar and put on incenſe, and go*

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quickly unto the Congregation and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun; mark how Gods wrath is kindled, in the 41. *v.* the Congregation had murmured; and they murmured but againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, perhaps you murmur more directly againſt God, and that was againſt God in murmuring againſt Gods Miniſters, it was againſt God, but not ſo directly; but it may be the murmuring of your hearts is more directly againſt Gods dealing with you: if you murmur againſt thoſe that God makes inſtruments, becauſe Gou have not every thing that you would have, as againſt your covernours or ſuch and ſuch tha are publick inſtruments, it is againſt God; it was but againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron* that the Iſraelites murmured, and they ſaid that *Moſes* and *Aaron* had killed the people of the Lord though it was the hand of God, that was upon them for their former wickedneſs, in murmuring. It is uſual for wicked vile hearts to deal thus with God, then when Gods hand is a little upon them for to murmur again and again, and ſo to bring upon themſelves even infinit kinds of evils: but now the anger of God was quickly kindled, Oh ſaith *Moſes*, Go, take the Cenſer quickly, for wrath is gone out from Jehovah, the plague is begun: ſo while you are a murmuring in your families, the wrath of God may quickly go out againſt you, quickly in a morning or evening, when you are a murmuring, the wrath of God may come quickly out upon your families or perſons, you are never ſo prepared for preſent wrath as when your are in a murmuring diſcontented fit, thoſe that ſtand by and ſee you in a murmuring diſcontented fit, have cauſe to ſay, Oh let us go and take the Cenſer, let us go to prayer, for we are afraid that wrath is gone out againſt this family, againſt this perſon. And it were a very good thing for thee that art a Godly wife, when you ſee your husband come home and fall to murmuring becauſe things go not according to his deſire, to go to prayer and ſay, Lord pardon the ſin of my husband: and ſo for the husband to go to God in prayer falling down and beſeeching of him that wrath may not come out againſt his family for the murmuring of his Wife. And the Truth is, at this Day there hath been (at leaſt lately) as much murmuring in *England* as ever was

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and even in this very particular the plague is begun, and this very judgment it doth come many times upon murmuring, upon those that are so discontented in their families, and are always grumbling and murmuring at any thing that falls out amiss, I say this text of Scripture in *Numbers* doth clearly hold forth this, That the Lord brings the Plague upon men for this sin of murmuring, he doth it in Kingdoms and families, and upon particular Persons. Though we cannot always point out the particular sin that God brings this for; yet this should be examined how far we are guilty of this sin of murmuring; because the Scripture holds forth this so cleerly, that *Moses* when he did but hear that they murmured, Do they murmur (saith he) Go forth quickly, and seek to pacifie the anger of God, *For wrath is gone out and the plague is begun.* And 1 *Cor.* 10. 10. there you have a notable example of Gods heavy displeasure against murmuring, *Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.* Take heed of murmuring as some of them did, (he speaks of the people of *Israel* in the Wilderness) but saith he, what came of it? *They were destroyed of the Destroyer.* Now the destroyer is thought to be the fiery Serpents that were sent among them. They murmured, and God sent fiery Serpents to sting them. What do you think that such a cross and affliction doth sting you? perhaps such an affliction is upon you, and it seems to be grievous for the present, What? do you murmur and repine? God hath greater Crosses to bring upon you: Those People that murmur for the want of outward comforts, for want of water, (sometimes) and for want of bread, they murmur, but the Lords sends fiery serpents among them. I may say to a murmuring heart, *Wo to thee that strivest with thy Maker*: wo to that man, that woman that strives against their maker: What dost thou else, but strive against thy Maker; Thy Maker hath the absolute dispose of thee, and wilt thou strive against thy maker? what doth this murmuring discontented heart of thine do otherwise but wrangle and contend and strive even with God himself? O wo to him that strives against his Maker, I may further say to thee, as God speaks to *Job*, Job 28. 1, 2. when *Job* was impa-

tient, *Now God spake* (saith the text) *out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkneth counsel by words without knowledge?* So dost thou speak against Gods ways, and his providences that hath fallen out concerning thy estate and outward comforts? who is this; *Who is this that darkneth counsel by words without knowledge?* Where is that man or woman whose hearts are so bold and impudent, as dare speak against the administration of Gods providence?

The Tenth evil of murmuring and discontent is this, *There is a great curse of God upon it, so far as it doth prevail in one that is wicked, it hath the curse of God upon it.* In *Ps.* 50. 15. see there what the curse of God is upon wicked and ungodly men, *Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.* That is the imprecation and curse upon wicked and ungodly men, that if they be not satisfied, they shall grudge; when thou art not satisfied in thy desires, and findest thy heart grudging against God, apply this Scripture, What, is the curse of the wicked upon me? This is the curse that is threatned upon wicked and ungodly ones, That they shall grudge if they be not satisfied. And in *Deut.* 28. 67. There its threatned as a curse of God upon men, that they cannot be content with their present condition, *But they shall say in the morning, would God it were even, and at even, would God it were morning,* & so they lie tossing up and down and cannot be content with any condition that they are in, because of the sore afflictions that be upon them: and therefore it is further threatned as a curse upon them, in the 34. ver, *That they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see:* This is but the extremity of their discontentedness; that is, They shall be so discontented, as they shall be even mad. Many men and women in discontented moods are mad kind of people, and though you may please your selves in such a mad kind of behaviour, yet know, that it is a curse of God upon men to be given up to a kind of madness for evils, that they suppose are upon them, and that they fear. In the 47. verse, there is a notable expression for to shew the curse of God upon murmuring hearts, the Lord there threatning the curse that shall be

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upon men, (saith he) ver. 45. 46. and 47. *The Curse shall pursue thee, and they shall be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever: Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.* God here threatens to bring his curse so upon them, as to make them a wonder and a sign to others: why? *because they have not served the Lord with joyfulness of heart*, (that may be added to that of the wrath of God upon men, therefore God would bring such a curse upon them, as would make them a wonder to all that were about them. Oh how far art thou then that hast a murmuring heart, from serving the Lord with joyfulness?

The Eleventh Evil of discontent and murmuring is this, *There is much of the spirit of Satan in a murmuring spirit.* The Devil is the most discontented creature that is in the world; He is the proudest creature that is, and the discontentedst creature, and the most dejected creature. Now therefore so much discontentment as thou hast, so much of the spirit of Satan thou hast; It was the unclean spirit that went up and down and found no rest; so when a man or womans spirit hath no rest, it is a sign that it hath much of the unclean spirit, of the spirit of Satan, and thou shouldest think this with thy self, O Lord, what have I the spirit of Satan upon me? It is Satan that is the most discontented spirit that is, and Oh! how much of his spirit have I upon me that can find no rest at all?

Twelfthly, Murmuring and discontent hath this evil in it, *There is an absolute necessity, thou should'st have disquiet all the days of thy life.* As if a man that is in a great crowd, should complain that other folks touch him. While we are in this world God hath so ordered things, that afflictions must befall us, and if we will complain and be discontented upon every cross and affliction, we must complain and be discontent all the days of our lives, Yea, God in just judgement will let things fall out on purpose to vex those that have vexing spirits and discontented hearts, & therefore there is a necessity that they should live

disquiet all their days; and men will not much care to disquiet those that are continually murmuring, Oh they will have disquiet all their days.

Lastly, There is this dreadful Evil in discontent and murmuring, *God may justly withdraw his Care of you, his Protection over you, seeing God cannot please you in his administrations.* We use to say so to discontented Servants; Nay, if you be not pleased mend your selves when you will: If you have a servant not content with his diet, and Wages, and work, you say, mend your selves. So may God justly say to us, we that profess our selves servants to him, to be in his work and yet are discontented with this thing or that in Gods Family, God might justly say, mend your selves: What if God should say to any of you, if my care over you will not please you, than take care of your selves, if my protection over you will not please you, than protect your selves? Now all things that do befal you, befal you through a providence of God, and if you be those that belong to God, there is a protection of God over you, and a care of God. Now if God should say, Well, you shall not have the benefit of my protection any longer, and I will take no further care of you; would not this be a most dreadful Judgment of God from Heaven upon you? Take heed what you do then in in being discontent with Gods will towards you, and indeed upon discontent this may befall you. And this is the reason why many people, though Gods protection hath been very gracious over them for a time, and they have thriven abundantly, yet afterwards almost all that behold them may say, that they live as if God hath cast off his care over them, and if God did not care what befell them. Now then my brethren, put all these together, all that we were speaking of the last day, and these particulars that have been added now this morning for the setting out of a murmuring and discontented spirit; Oh what an ugly face hath this sin of Murmuring, and Discontentedness? On what cause is there that we should lay our hands upon our hearts, and go away and be humbled before the Lord because of this! Whereas your thoughts were wont to be

exercised about providing for your selves, and getting more comforts to your selves, let the stream of your thoughts now be turned to humble your selves for your discontentedness, Oh that you may have your hearts break before God, for otherwise you shall fall to it again, O the wretchedness of mans heart! You will find in Scripture concerning the people of *Israel*, how strangely they fell to their murmuring again and again; do but observe three texts of Scripture, for that, the first in the 15. of *Exod.* At the beginning there you shall have *Moses* and the Congregation singing to God and blessing God for his mercy, *Then sang* Moses *and the Children of* Israel *this Song unto the Lord, and spake saying, I will Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, the Horse and his Rider hath he thrown into the Sea.* And then, *The Lord is my Strength and song, and he is become my Salvation, he is my God and I will prepare him an habitation, my Fathers God, and I will exalt him*; and so he goes on, *And who is like unto thee O Lord amongst the Gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonder?* Thus their hearts triumphed in God: but mark! before the Chapter is ended in the 23. ver. *When they come to* Marah (in the same Chapter) *they could not drink of the Waters of* Marah, *for they were bitter, therefore the name of it was called* Marah, *and the people murmured against* Moses. After so great a mercy as this was, what unthankfulness was there here in their murmuring! Then God gave them water, but in the very next Chapter they fell to their murmuring, you read not that they were humbled for their former murmuring, and therefore they murmur again, *Exod.* 16. 1, &c. *All the Congregation of the Children of* Israel *came to the wilderness of* Sin, *&c. And the whole Congregation* (in the 2. ver.) *of the Children of* Israel *murmured against* Moses *and against* Aaron *in the Wilderness and the Children of* Israel *said unto them, would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the Land of* Egypt, *when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat Bread to the full*, now they want flesh, they wanted water before, but now they want meat they fell to murmuring again, they were not humbled for this murmuring against God neither when God gave them flesh according to their desires but

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they fell to murmuring again, they wanted somewhat else in the very next Chap. they went not far in the 17 of *Exod.* beginning; *All the Congregation of the Children of* Israel *journied from the Wilderness of* Sin, *and pitched in* Rephidim, *and there was no water for the people to drink*; Then in the second verse, *Wherefore the people did chide with* Moses *and said*; *Give us Water that we may drink*; *and* Moses *said unto them, Why chide you with me? wherefore do you tempt the* Lord: and in the third verse, *And the people thirsted there for Water, and the people murmured against* Moses *and said, wherefore is this, that thou hast brought us out of* Egypt *to kill us, and our Children, and our Cattel with Thirst?* So one time after another, still as soon as ever they had received the mercy, then they were a little quieted, but they were not humbled. I bring these Scriptures for this, to shew, That if we have not been humbled for murmuring, the next cross that we meet withal we will fall to murmuring again.

There are divers Aggravations of this sin of murmuring, I'll mention but one now, and I shall but begin that. The first Aggravation is this,

To murmur when we enjoy abundance of mercy: the greater and the more abundant the mercy is that we enjoy, the greater and the viler is the sin of murmuring. As here now, when God had newly delivered them out of the house of bondage, for them now to murmur because they want some few particulars that they desire, Oh to sin against God after a great mercy, this is a great aggravation, and a most abominable thing. Oh give God praise according to his excellent greatness, to his excellent goodness and grace.

And now, Hath God given to you the Contentment of your heart? Take you heed of being the cause of any grief to your Brethren: think not that because God hath been gracious unto you, that therefore he hath given you liberty for to bring them into bondage, Olet not there be such an ill effect of Gods mer-

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ly to you; God is very jealous of the glory of his mercy, and if there should be an ill use made of the mercy of God after we enjoy it, Oh it would go to the heart of God; nothing is more grievous to the heart of God than the abuse of mercy; Oh this is a great aggravation of sin, to sin against the mercies of God: But this Aggravation we shall speak to, God willing, the next day.

SERMON IX. *At* Stepney, *Sept.* 21. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

NOw because it is very hard to work upon a murmuring spirit, there are divers Aggravations I told you we are to consider of for the further setting out of the greatness of this sin; I mentioned but only one the last day; now we shall proceed to that.

The first Aggravation of the sin of discontent and murmuring is this, *For men and women to be discontent in the midst of mercies; in enjoyment of abundance of mercies.* To be discontent in any afflicted condition, is sinfull and evil, but to be discontent when we are in the midst of Gods mercies, when we are not able to count the mercies of God, yet after to be discontent

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becauſe we have not all we would have, this is a greater evil. I only mentioned this the laſt day, that I might ſhew to you what a great ſin it is at ſuch a time as this, The Lord, this Summer hath multiplied mercies one upon another, the Lord hath made this Summer to be a continual miracle of mercy; never did a Kingdom enjoy in ſo little ſpace of time ſuch mercies one upon another: Now the publick mercies of God ſhould quiet our hearts & keep us from diſcontent, & the ſin of diſcontent; for private afflictions are exceedingly aggravated by the conſideration of publick mercies, to the land, when the Lord hath been ſo merciful to the land, wilt thou be fretting & murmuring, becauſe thou haſt not in thy family all the comforts that thou wouldſt have? as it is a great aggravation of a mans evil for him to rejoyce immoderately in his own private comforts when the Church is in an affliction, when the publick ſuffers grievous and hard troubles, if any man ſhall then rejoyce and give liberty to himſelf: at that time to ſatisfie his fleſh to the uttermoſt in all outward comforts, this is a great aggravation of his ſin; So on the contrary for any man to be immoderately troubled for any private afflictions when it goes well with the publick, with the Churches, this is a great aggravation of his ſin: It may be when the Church of God was loweſt, and it went worſe with other parts, yet thou didſt abate nothing of the comfort of thy fleſh, but gaveſt full liberty to ſatisfie thy fleſh as formerly, know this was a great ſin, ſo on the other ſide when we have received ſuch mercies in publick, we ſhould have all our private afflictions ſwallowed up in publick mercies, and we ſhould think with our ſelves, though we be afflicted for our particular, yet (bleſſed be God) it goes well with the Church and with the publick: the conſideration of that ſhould mightily quiet our hearts in all our private diſcontents, and if it doth not ſo, know that our ſin is much encreaſed by the mercies of God that are abroad. Now ſhall Gods mercies aggravate our ſins? This is a ſad thing, this is to turn the mercies of God to be our miſery. Didſt not thou pray to God for theſe mercies that God hath ſent of late to the publick, is not there enough in them to quiet thy heart for ſome private trouble thou meeteſt withal in thy family? is not there good-

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nesse enough there to cure thy discontentment? Certainly they were not such mercies so worthy to be prayed for, except they have so much excellency in them as to countervail some private afflictions. Publick mercies are the aggravations of private discontent, as so of publick discontent too; if we receive so many publick mercies, yet if every thing goes not in the publick according as we desire, if we be discontent at that, it will exceedingly aggravate our sin, God may say, What shall I bestow such mercies upon a people, and yet if they have not every thing they would have, they will be discontent? Oh! its exceeding evil. So in particular the mercies that concern thy self, thy family, if thou wouldest consider thou hast a great many more mercies then thou hadst afflictions, I dare boldly averr it concerning any one in this Congregation, suppose thy afflictions to be what they will, there is never a one of you but that have more mercies than afflictions.

Object. You will say, *I, but you do not know what our afflictions are, our afflictions are so as you do not conceive of them, because you feel them not.*

Answer. Though I cannot know what your afflictions are, yet I know what your mercies are, and I know they are so great, as I am sure there can be no afflictions in this world so great as the mercies you have: if it were but this mercy, That you have this day of grace and salvation continued to you, its a greater mercy than any affliction; set any affliction by this mercy and see which would weigh heaviest, this is certainly greater than any affliction; that you have the day of grace and salvation, that you are not now in Hell, this is a greater mercy; that you have the sound of the Gospel yet in your ears; that you have the use of your reason, this is a greater mercy than your afflictions, that you have the use of your limbs, your senses, that you have the health of your bodies; health of body is a greater mercy than poverty is an affliction; there is no man that is rich but if he be wise, if he hath a sickly body, he would part with all his riches that he might have his health; therefore thy mercies are

more than thy afflictions. We find in Scripture how the Holy-Ghoſt doth aggravate the ſin of diſcontent from the conſideration of mercies, you have a notable Scripture for it in the 16 of *Numb.* 8. verſe. &c. Its a ſpeech of *Moſes* to *Korah* and his company when they murmured, *And* Moſes *ſaid unto* Korah, *Hear I pray you ye ſons of* Levi, (there is ſomewhat that you are the ſons of *Levi*) *Seemeth it but a ſmall thing unto you, that the God of* Iſrael *hath ſeparated you from the Congregation of* Iſrael, *to bring you near unto himſelf, to do the ſervice of the Tabernacle of the Lord, and to ſtand before the Congregation to miniſter unto them? Korah* and his company were murmuring, but mark how *Moſes* aggravates this; *Seemeth it a ſmall thing unto you, that the God of* Iſrael *hath ſeparated you from the Congregation of* Iſrael, *to bring you near to himſelf to do the Service of the Tabernacle of the Lord?* &c. You ſee 'tis a great honor that God puts upon a man, a great mercy that he doth beſtow upon any man, to ſeparate him from others for himſelf to come near him, to imploy him in the ſervice of the Tabernacle, to miniſter to the Congregation in holy things, this is a great mercy, and indeed its ſuch a mercy as one would think there ſhould be none that God beſtows ſuch a mercy upon, that ſhould have a murmuring heart for any affliction; Its true, many Miniſters of God they meet with hard things that might diſcourage them, and trouble and grieve their ſpirits, but now this conſideration that God is pleaſed to imploy them in ſuch a ſervice near to himſelf, that though they cannot do good to themſelves, yet they may do good to others, this ſhould quiet them: And yet in the 10 verſe. *And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy Bretheren, the Sons of* Levi, *with thee, and ſeek ye the Prieſt-hood alſo?* have not you enough already? but ſtill you are diſcontented with what you have, and muſt have, more, ſeek ye yet more? *Seek ye the Prieſt-hood alſo? for which cauſe both thou and all thy Company are gathered together againſt the Lord: And what is* Aaron *that ye murmur againſt him?* what hath God given you ſuch things, and yet will you be murmuring becauſe you cannot have more? Methinks that this place ſhould keep Miniſters from murmuring, though they ſhould

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meet with never such afflictions and crosses, and unkind dealings from men, yet still they should go on with hearts quieted and comforted in the work that God hath set them about, and labour to countervail all their afflictions by being more abundant in the work of the Lord. That is the first text of Scripture that shews how the Mercies we enjoy are aggravations to the sin of murmuring.

And then a second Scripture is in the second of *Job*: 10. *verse*, A speech of *Job* to his wife, *what* saith *Job*? when his wife would have had him curse God and die, (that was a degree beyond murmuring) why saith he, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish Women, shall we receive good at the hand of God and not evil?* you see *Job* did help himself against all murmuring thoughts against the ways of God with this consideration, that he had received so much good from the Lord; what though we receive evil, yet do not we receive good as well as evil? let us set one against the other, that's the way we should go. In the 7 of *Ecclesiastes* the 14 *verse*, you have a notable Scripture there whereby you may see what course is to be taken when the heart rises in murmuring, *In the day of Prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider*, what should they consider? mark what follows, *God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man shall find nothing after him.* God also hath set the one over against the other, that's thus, when thou art in prosperity, then indeed every man can be joyful; but what if afflictions befal him, what then? then Consider: Consider what? That God hath set one over against the other, thou hast a great deal of affliction, and thou hast had a great deal of prosperity, thou hast many troubles, and thou hast had many mercies, make one column of mercies, and one column of afflictions, and write one against the other, and see if God hath not filled one column as full as the other, you look altogether upon your afflictions, but look upon your mercies also; for instance, it may be God hath afflicted you in one child, but he hath been merciful to you in another child, set one against the other: God afflicted *David* in *Absolom*, but he was merciful to *David*

in *Solomon* and therefore when *David* cried out, *Oh Absolon my Son, my Son*; if *David* had thought upon *Solomon*, and cryed, Oh *Solomon* my ſon, my ſon, it would have quieted him. And it may be God hath been merciful to thee in a Wife, or in thy husband, ſet that againſt thy affliction it may be God croſſes thee in thine eſtate, but it may be he doth imploy thee in his ſervice, it may be thou art afflicted in ſome of thy Friends, but thou haſt other Friends that are greater mercies to thee, and therefore you ſhould ſet one againſt the other, and it doth concern you ſo to do, for thoſe mercies will be aggravations of your ſins, and you had better make Gods mercies a means to leſſen your ſins than to be the aggravation of your ſins: If you make not the mercies of God to help you againſt your murmuring, you will make them to be aggravations of the ſin of murmuring. I beſeech you for this take but this one conſideration further, and if you will but work it upon your hearts, I hope you may find a great deal of power in it. You find afflictions, and your hearts are troubled and murmur, conſider how Gods mercies do aggravate this ſin thus: in the midſt of our ſins we do make account God ſhould accept of our ſervices, do but conſider thus, if in the midſt of our many ſins we hope that God will accept of our poor ſervices, why then ſhould not we in the midſt of our afflictions bleſs God for his many mercies? Shall God be thus gracious to us, that notwithſtanding our many ſins, yet he will not caſt away our poor duties and ſervices that we perform, then why ſhould not we in the midſt of our ſufferings accept of what mercies we have, and not ſlight them and diſregard them? if thou in the midſt of Gods mercies ſhall not be willing to bear afflictions that Gods lays upon thee, then it were juſt with God that in the midſt of thy ſins he ſhould not regard any of thy duties; now is there not as much power in thy manifold ſins to cauſe God to reject thy duties and ſervices, as there is power in afflictions in the midſt of many mercies to take off thy heart from being affected with Gods mercies? And that's the firſt aggravation of the ſin of murmuring, To murmur in the midſt of mercies.

A ſecond Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is, *When we murmur*

murmur for small things. Saith *Naamans* servant to him, Father (for so he called him) *if the Prophet had required you to do some great thing, would not you have done it? how much more this little thing.* So I say, if the Lord had required you to suffer some great matter, would not you have been willing to suffer? how much more this little thing. I remember I have read in *Seneca* a Heathen, he hath this similitude, which is a very fine one to set out the great evil of murmuring upon smaller afflictions, (saith he) Suppose a man hath a very fair house to dwell in, and he hath fair Orchards and Gardens, and set about with brave tall Trees for Ornament, if this man now should murmur because the wind blows off a few leaves off his Trees, what a most unreasonable thing were it for him to be weeping and wringing his hands, because he loses a few leaves off his Trees, when he hath abundance of all kinds of fruits; Thus it is with many (saith he) though they have a great many comforts about them, yet some little matter, the blowing off a few leaves from them, is enough to disquiet them. It was a great evil when *Ahab* having a Kingdom, yet the want of his *Neighbours Vineyard* had such power to disquiet him: So for us to murmur, not because we have not such a thing as we have need of, but because we have not what possibly we might have, this is a very great sin. Suppose God gives a woman a Child that hath all the Limbs and parts compleat, a Child that is very comely, and hath excellent parts, wit and memory, but it may be there is a wart that grows upon the finger of the Child, and she murmurs at it, and Oh what an affliction is that to her! she is so taken up with that, as she forgets to give any thanks to God for her Child, and all the goodness of God to her in the Child is swallowed up in that; would not you say, this were a folly and a very great evil in a woman so to do, Truly our afflictions if we weighed them aright, they are but such kind of things in comparison of our mercies *Rebekah* she had a mighty desire to have Children but because she found some trouble in her body when she was with Child, said she, *Why am I thus?* As if she should say, I had as good have none, only because she found a little pain and trouble in her body. To be discontent when the affliction is small and little, that encreases very much the

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ſin of murmuring it is too much for any one to murmur upon the heavieſt croſs that can befal one in this world, but upon ſome ſmall things to be diſcontent and murmur, that's worſe. I have read of one that when he lay upon a heap of damask Roſes, he complained there was one of the Roſe leaves lay double under him: So weare ready thus for very ſmall things to make complaints and be diſcontented with our condition. And that's the Second Aggravation.

A Third Aggravation is this, *For men that are of parts and abilities, to whom God hath given wiſdom, for them to be diſcontent and murmur, that's more then if others do it.* Murmuring and diſcontentedneſs it too much in the weakeſt, yet we can bear with it ſometimes in Children and Women that are weak; but for thoſe that are men, men of underſtanding, that have wiſdom, that God imploys in publick ſervice, that they ſhould be diſcontent with every thing, this is an exceeding great evil; for men in their families to whom God hath given parts and wiſdom when things fall out amiſs there, to be always murmuring and repining, their ſin is greater than for women and children to do it.

A Fourth Aggravation is, *The conſideration of the freeneſs of all Gods Mercies to us.* What ever we have it is of free-coſt: what though we have not all we would have, ſeeing what we have is free; If what we have were earned, then it were ſome what, but when we conſider that all is from God, for us to murmur at his diſpenſations, is very ill. Suppoſe a man were in a family entertained by a friend, and he did not pay for his board, but he hath it given him for nothing, its expected ſuch a one ſhould not be ready to find fault with every thing in the houſe, with ſervants, or with meat at table, or the like; if ſuch a one that hath plentiful proviſion, and all given him *gratis*, and pays nothing for his diet, ſhould be diſcontented if a Cup ſhould not be filled for him as he would have it, or if he ſhould ſtay a minute of an hour longer for a thing then he would, this we would account a great evil: So it is with us, we are at Gods Table every day, and it is upon free coſt whatever we have, It is accounted very unmannerly for a man at a friends Table to find fault with things, though at home he may be bold: Now when we

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are at the Table of God (for ſo all Gods adminiſtrations to us are his Table) and are free coſt, now for us to be finding fault, and be diſcontented, this is a great aggravation of our ſin.

A Fifth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is this, *When Men and Women murmur, and are diſcontented and impatient, when they have the things that they were diſcontented for the want of, before they had them.* So it is ſometimes with children, they will cry for ſuch a thing, and when you give it them, then throw it away, they are as much diſcontented as they were before. So it was with the Children of *Iſrael*, nothing would quiet them, but they muſt have a King; *Samuel* perſwaded them to the contrary, and told them what kind of King they ſhould have; and when they had a King, in *Hoſe*, 10. 3. *What ſhall a King do to us?* they were not contented when they had one. So *Rachel*, ſhe muſt have children or elſe ſhe died, and when ſhe had a little trouble ſhe was diſcontented too; ſo that we are neither well full nor faſting (as we uſe to ſay.)

The ſixth aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is this, *For thoſe men and women to be diſcontent and murmur that God hath raiſed from mean and low eſtates and conditions*; This is a very great aggravation if thou be diſcontent now: There was a time when thou wert low enough; and perhaps when thou wert ſo low then thou didſt ſay, *O if God would deliver me from ſuch an affliction, or give me but a little more in my eſtate, I ſhould think my ſelf in a good condition*: but if God by his providence doth raiſe thee, thou art as greedy of more ſtill as thou wert before, and as much diſcontented as thou wert before: this is an evil thing for people that had mean breeding, and poor beginning for them to be ſo nice, and dainty that nothing can pleaſe them, whereas there was a time not long ſince that they were low and mean enough; But it is very ordinary for thoſe that are raiſed from a low and mean condition, to be the more nice and dainty, and more proud when they are raiſed than others that are of better breeding: Its too much for a child to be diſcontented in his fathers houſe, but if a man hath taken a poor begger boy, if you had taken ſuch a one into your houſe, that lay begging at your door, and ſet him at your own table,

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could you bear that ſuch a one ſhould complain that ſuch a thing is not well dreſt or the like; you could not bear it if your children ſhould do it, but you could bear it a great deal better with them then to hear ſuch a one do it: but thou art a poor beggar, and God hath (as it were) taken thee into his great Family, and if the Lord hath been pleaſed to raiſe thee higher, that now thou haſt a competency, that thou may'ſt live as a man, to be of uſe and ſervice in the place where God hath ſet thee, now wilt thou be diſcontent becauſe thou haſt not every thing that thou deſireſt? We know the Prodigal when he came to himſelf, Oh! ſaith he, *in my fathers houſe is bread enough*; he did not ſay there's good chear enough, and a great deal of dainties; no, he thought of nothing but bread, there's bread enough; So its ordinary for men and women when they are in a low condition, they think that if they may have bread, any competency, they will be contented and bleſs God; but when they have their bread and things convenient, they muſt have more or elſe they are not contented; know that this is an exceeding great aggravation to thy diſcontentment, when you are raiſed from a very low condition, and yet you cannot be contented with what you have.

A ſeventh aggravation of this ſin is this, *For them to be diſcontent that have been very great ſinners and ungodly in their former time.* For men and women that have much guiltineſs upon them, the guilt of very many ſins upon them, that have provoked God exceedingly againſt them, and have brought themſelves in a moſt dreadful manner under the ſentence of Gods Juſtice, and yet God being pleaſed to reprieve them, for them to murmur and to be diſcontent with Gods adminiſtrations towards them, this is exceeding evil. Oh it were conſideration enough to quiet any murmuring in our hearts, to think thus, We are but ſinners, why ſhould not we be ſufferers that are ſinners: But then conſider, we that are ſuch great ſinners, guilty of ſuch notorious ſins, that it is a wonder that we are out of Hell at this preſent, yet for us to be diſcontent and murmur, how exceedingly doth this encreaſe our ſins: Conſider how we have croſſed God in our ſins, then if God ſhould croſs us in the way of our ſufferings, ſhould not we ſit down quiet without murmuring?

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Certainly thou never kneweſt what it was to be humbled for thy manifold ſins, that art diſcontented at the adminiſtration of God towards thee.

The eight Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring, *For thoſe men that are of little uſe in the world, for them to be Diſcontented.* If you have but a beaſt that you make much of, you will feed it well; but if you have but little uſe of him, then you turn him into the commons, little proviſion ſerves his turn, becauſe you make no uſe of him: if we liv'd ſo as to be exceeding uſefull to God and his Church, we might expect that God would be pleaſed to come in, in ſome encouraging way to us; but when our conſciences tell us, we live and do but little ſervice for God what if God ſhould turn us upon the commons, yet we are fed according to our work, according to our imployment; Why ſhould any creature be ſerviceable to thee, who art ſo little ſerviceable to God? this one meditation would much help us, to think I am diſcontent becauſe ſuch and ſuch Creatures are not ſerviceable to me, but why ſhould I expect that they ſhould be ſerviceable to me, when I am not ſerviceable to God? And that is the Eight Aggravation:

A ninth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is this, *For us to be diſcontent at that time when God is to humble us.* It ſhould be the care of a Chriſtian, to obſerve what are Gods ways towards him: what is God about to do with me at this time? is God about to raiſe me, to comfort me? let me cloſe with Gods goodneſs, and bleſs his name, let me joyn with the work of God, when he offers mercy to me, to take the mercies he offers. But again, is God about to humble me? is God about to break my heart, and to bring my heart down to him? let me joyn with God in this work of his, this is for a Chriſtian to walk with God it is ſaid that *Enoch* and *Noah* walked with God; walked with God. what is that? That is to obſerve what is the work of God that God is now about, and to joyn with God in that work of his. ſo that according as God turns this way or that way, the heart ſhould turn with God, & have ſutable workings unto the workings of God towards him. Now then, I am diſcontented and murmur becauſe I am afflicted; Therefore thou art afflicted be-

becauſe God would humble thee, and the great deſign that God hath in afflicting of thee, is, to break and humble thy heart; And wilt thou now maintain a ſpirit quite oppoſite to the work of God? for thee to murmur and to be diſcontented, is to reſiſt the work of God; God is doing thee good, if thou couldeſt ſee it, now if he be pleaſed to ſanctifie thy affliction, to break that hard heart of thine, and humble that proud ſpirit of thine, it would be the greateſt mercy that ever thou hadſt in all thy life; Now wilt thou yet ſtand out againſt God? its even as if thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Well, the Lord is about to break me, and humble me, but he ſhall not; this is the Language of thy murmuring and thy diſcontentedneſs, though thou dareſt not ſay ſo, but tho' thou ſay'ſt not ſo in words, yet it is certainly the language of the Temper of thy ſpirit: Oh! conſider what aggravation this is; I am diſcontented when God is about to work ſuch a work upon me as is exceedingly for my good, but yet I ſtand out againſt him and reſiſt him. Thats the Ninth Aggravation.

The Tenth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring and diſcontent is this, *The more palpable and remarkable the hand of God appears to bring about an affliction, the greater is the ſin of murmuring and diſcontent under an affliction.* It is a great evil at any time to murmur and be diſcontent, but though it be a ſin, when I ſee but an ordinary providence working for me, not to ſubmit to that; but when I ſee an extraordinary providence working, that is a greater ſin, that is, When I ſee the Lord in ſome remarkable way working about ſuch an affliction, beyond what any could have thought of, ſhall I reſiſt ſuch a remarkable hand of God? ſhall I ſtand out againſt God when I ſee God expreſs his will in ſuch a remarkable manner, that he would have me to be in ſuch a condition? indeed before we ſee the will of God apparent we may deſire to avoid an affliction, and may uſe means for it, but now, when we ſee God expreſſing his will from Heaven in a manner beyond ordinary, and more remarkable, then certainly it is fit for us to fall down and ſubmit to him, and not to oppoſe; when God comes with a mighty ſtream againſt us, its our beſt way to fall down before him and not ſo to reſiſt; for as it is an argument of a mans diſobedience, when there is not only

only a command against a sin, but when God reveals his Command in a terrible way, the more solemn the Command of God is, the greater is the sin in breaking that Command; so the more remarkable the hand of God is in bringing an affliction upon us, the greater is the sin for us to murmur and be discontented. Then God expects that we should fall down when he (as it were) speaks from Heaven to thee by name, and saith, Well I will have this spirit of thine down, do not you see that my hand is stretched out, my eyes are upon you, my thoughts are upon you, and I must have that proud spirit of thine down. O then it is fit for the creature to yeild and submit unto him. When you speak in an ordinary manner to your servants, or Children, you expect they should regard what you say, but when you make them stand still by you, and speak to them in a more solemn way, then if they should disregard what you say, you are very impatient; Lo certainly God cannot take it well, when ever he doth appear from Heaven in such a remarkable way to bring an affliction, if then we do not submit to him.

An Eleventh Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *To be discontented though God hath been exercising of us long under affliction, yet still to remain discontented.* For a man or woman at first when an affliction befals them to have a murmuring heart, then it is an evil; but to have a murmuring heart when God hath been a long time exercising them with afflictions, its more evil. Though an Heifer at first when the yoke is put upon him he wrigles up and down and will not be quiet, but if after many months or years it shall not draw quietly, the Husbandman would rather feed and fat and prepare it for the Butcher, than be troubled any longer with it. So though the Lord was content to pass by that discontented spirit of thine at first, yet God having a long time kept the yoke upon thee, thou hast been under his afflicting hand (it may be) divers years, and yet thou remainest discontent still; it were just with God that he should bear thy murmuring no longer, and that thy discontent under the affliction should be but a preparation to thy destruction, So you see when a man or woman hath been long exercised with afflictions, and yet are discontented, that is an aggravation of the

ſin: Mark that text in *Heb.* 12. 11. *Now* ſaith the Scripture) *No chaſtening for the preſent is joyous but grievous nevertheleſs afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs, unto them which are exerciſed thereby.* It is true, our afflictions are not joyous but grievous, though at firſt when our afflictions come, it is very grievous, but yet (ſaith the text) *afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs to thoſe that are exerciſed thereby*; When thou haſt been a long time in the School of afflictions, thou art a very dullard in Chriſts School if thou haſt not learned this Contentment, *I have learned* (ſaith Saint Paul) *in every State therewith to be content: Paul* had learned this leſſon quickly, thou haſt been a learning many years, perhaps thou mayſt ſay as *Heman* did. *That thou art afflicted from thy youth up.* in 88. *Pſ.* Oh it is a very evil thing if being exerciſed long with afflictions you are not yet contented. The eye is as tender a part as any in a mans body, but yet the eye is able to continue in, and bear a great deal of Cold, becauſe it is more uſed to it: ſo thoſe that are uſed to afflictions, thoſe that God exerciſes much with afflictions (though they have tender ſpirits otherwiſe) yet they ſhould have learned Contentedneſs by this time. a new Cart may creek and make a noiſe, but after the uſe of it a while it will not do ſo: So when thou wert firſt a Chriſtian newly come into the work of Chriſt, perhaps thou makeſt a noiſe and canſt not bear afflictions; but art thou an old Chriſtian, and yet wilt thou be a murmuring Chriſtian? Oh that is a ſhame for any that are ancient profeſſors, that have been a long time in the School of Jeſus Chriſt to have murmuring and diſcontented ſpirits: and thus you have had Eleven Aggravations of the ſin of murmuring and diſcontentment.

But now my Brethren becauſe this diſcontented humor is a very tough humor, and it is very hard to work upon; there is none that are diſcontented but will have ſomething to ſay for their diſcontent, I ſhall therefore deſire to take away what every diſcontented heart hath to ſay for himſelf.

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The *PLEAS* of a diſcontented heart.

In the firſt place, *Saith one that is diſcontented, it is not diſcontentment, it is the ſence of my condition, I hope you would have me ſenſible of my condition: perhaps when God takes away a Friend or ſome other comfort, they are inordinately ſorrowful, and wringing their hands as if they were undone, and let any one but ſpeak to them,* (ſay thus) *Would you not have me ſenſible of my affliction? and thus many would hide their ſinful murmuring under Gods hand with this pretence, that it is but ſenſibleneſs of their affliction.*

To that I anſwer, Firſt. There is no ſenſe of any affliction that will hinder the ſenſe of Gods mercies, nay the more we are ſenſible of our afflictions if it be in a gracious manner; the more ſenſible we will be of Gods mercy; but thou art ſo ſenſible of thy affliction, as it takes away the ſenſe of all thy mercies, Oh this is ſinful diſcontent, this is not to be ſenſible of thy condition as God would have thee, but it is to be ſenſible in a wicked way, you go beyond your bounds: By this rule you may come to know when your ſorrows and troubles for your afflictions go beyond the bounds; we may be ſorrowful when God afflicts, but Oh! that I might know when my ſorrow goes beyond the bounds of it: truly thou mayſt know it by this, Doth the ſenſe of thy afflictions take away the ſenſe of thy mercies if it doth then it goes beyond the bounds.

Secondly if, it were but a bare ſenſe of an affliction it would not hinder thee in the duties of thy condition; the right ſenſe of our afflictions will never hinder us in the performance of the duties of our condition, but thou art ſo ſenſible of thy affliction as thou art made unfit for the performance of any duties of the condition that God hath put thee in, ſurely it is more than meer ſenſe of thy affliction.

Thirdly, If it were but meer ſenſe of thy affliction, yet then thou couldeſt in this thy condition bleſs God for the mercies that others have, but thy diſcontentedneſs uſually breeds envy at it; when any one is diſcontented with their condition, they have an envious ſpirit at the conditions of thoſe that are delivered from what afflictions they bear, certainly then it is

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turned to be sowr and naught, when thou art so sensible of thy afflictions, and unsensible of mercies, as thou art unfit for the duties of thy condition, and envious at others that are not afflicted as thou art.

The Second *PLEA.*

But will a discontented heart say, *I am not so much troubled with my afflictions, but it is for my sin rather than my affliction, and I hope you will give leave that we should be troubled and discontented with our sin, and were it not for that sin that I see in my self, I should not be so discontented as I am, Oh it is sin that is heavy upon me, and it is that that troubles me more than my affliction.*

Deceive not thy own heart, there is a very great deceit in this: there is many people that when Gods hand is out against them, they will say, they are troubled for their sin, but the truth is, it is the affliction that doth trouble them rather then their sin, their heart doth exceedingly deceive them in this very thing: For,

First, They were never troubled for their sin before this Affliction came; but you will say, *it is true, I was not before, for my prosperity blinded me, but now God hath opened my eyes by afflictions*; Hath he so?

Secondly, Then thy great care will be rather for the removing of thy sin, than of thy affliction; Art thou more solicitous about the taking away thy sin, than the taking away of thine affliction?

Thirdly, If it be thy sin that troubles thee, If God should take away thy afflictions, yet except thy sin be taken away, and thy heart be better, this would not content thee, thou couldest not be satisfied, but we see it ordinarily, that if God removes their afflictions, there is no more trouble for their sin. Oh many do bely themselves in this, in saying that they are so troubled for their sin, and especially those that are so troubled that they are in danger to miscarry, and to make away themselves, there's not one in ten thousand that are in such a condition as this is, but it is afflictions rather than sin that puts them to it; indeed you lay all upon this, as if it were the work of the Word

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or the Spirit of bondage. I remember I heard not long ſince of a Divine that being judicious, and uſed to ſuch kind of things, there came a man to him mightily troubled for his ſin, and he could not tell what to do, he was ready to deſpair; the Divine looks upon him, ſaith he, Are you not in debt? he confeſt that he was; and at length the Miniſter began to find it out, that that was his trouble rather than his ſin; and ſo was a means to help him that way, that his Creditors ſhould not come upon him, and then the man was pretty quiet, and would not make away himſelf any Longer: For it is an uſual thing that if any thing befalls a man that doth croſs him, O then its their ſin that doth trouble them. Sometimes it is thus with Servants, if their Governours croſs them, then they are vext and fret, and come to deal with them, Oh then they will ſay they are ſorrowful for their ſin: but we muſt take heed of dallying with God that is the Seer and Searcher of the ſecrets of all hearts: many of you go ſullen and dumpiſh up and down your families, and then you ſay its your ſin that lies upon you, when God knows it is otherwiſe, it is becauſe you cannot have your wills as you ſhould have.

Fourthly, If thou beeſt troubled for thy ſin, then it will be thy great care not to ſin in thy trouble, nor by thy trouble to encreaſe thy ſin, but thou art troubled in ſuch a way as the truth is thou doſt encreaſe thy ſin in thy trouble, and ſince thou ſayeſt thou wert troubled for thy ſin, thou haſt committed more ſin than thou didſt before.

And then laſtly, If it be ſin that troubles thee, then thou haſt the more need to ſubmit to Gods hand; *and accept of the puniſhment of thine iniquity*, as it is in *Levit.* 26. 41. There is no ſuch conſideration to take away murmuring, as to look upon my ſin as the cauſe of my affliction.

The Third *PLEA.*

O ſaith another, I find my affliction is ſuch that God withdraws himſelf from me in mine affliction, that is that that troubles me, and can any Body be quiet then? can any Body be ſatisfied with ſuch a condition, when the Lord ſhall withdraw himſelf?

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Were my afflictions never ſo great, yet if I find not God withdrawing himſelf from me, I hope I could be content without my affliction, but I cannot find the preſence of God with me in this affliction, as ſometimes I have found, and it is that that troubles me, and makes me to be in ſuch a condition as I am.

Now to that I anſwer thus, Firſt it is a very evil thing for men and women upon their affliction to conclude that God is departed from them: it may be when it comes to be examined there is no other reaſon why thou thinkeſt that God is withdrawn and departed, but becauſe he doth afflict thee, now for thee to make ſuch a concluſion that every time Gods lays an affliction upon thee he is departed, this is a ſinful diſtemper of thy heart, and is very diſhonourable to God, and grievous to his ſpirit. In the 17. of *Ex.* verſe. 7. you may ſee how God was diſpleaſed there with ſuch a kind of diſtemper as this is, *And he called the name of the place* Maſſah *and* Meribah, *becauſe of the chiding of the Children of* Iſrael, *and becauſe they tempted the Lord, ſaying, is the Lord amongſt us? or not?* Mark they did murmur becauſe they were brought into afflictions, but ſee what the text ſaith, therefore the place was called *Maſſah* and *Meribah* becauſe they tempted the Lord, ſaying *is the Lord amongſt us, or not?* This was to tempt God; Sometimes we are afraid God is departed from us, and it is meerly becauſe we are afflicted. I beſeech you obſerve that Scripture, God calls it a tempting of him when he afflicts any, for them to conclude and ſay God is departed from them: if a child ſhould cry out of his Father, and ſay, that his Father is turned to be an enemy to him, becauſe he doth correct him, this would be taken ill. I beſeech you conſider of this one place, it may be of very great uſe to you, that you may not be ready to think that God is departed, becauſe you are afflicted.

Secondly, if God be departed, the greateſt ſign of Gods departing is becauſe you are ſo diſquiet, you make your diſquiet to be the fruit of Gods departing, and if it comes to be examined your diſquiet is the cauſe of Gods departing from you: if you could but cure your diſquiet, if you could but quiet your own hearts and get them into a better frame of contentedneſs under Gods hand in afflicting of you, then you would find Gods preſence

ſence with you, Will you be thus diſquiet till God comes again to you? your diſquiet drives him from you, and you can never expect God's coming to manifeſt himſelf comfortably to your Souls, till you have gotten your hearts quiet under your afflictions: and therefore here you ſee how croſly you reaſon; you reaſon, I am diſquiet becauſe God is gone, when the truth is God is gone becauſe thou art diſquiet; reaſon but the other way, O my diſquiet hath driven God from me, and therefore as even I would have the preſence of God to come again to me let my heart be quiet under the hand of God.

Thirdly, Doſt thou find God departing from thee in thine affliction? Wilt thou therefore depart from God too? Is this thy help? Canſt thou help thy ſelf that way? Becauſe God is gone, wilt thou go too? Do I indeed feel God departing from me? It may be it is ſo, it may be God for thy trial is departed a little from thee, and it is ſo indeed? What unwiſe courſe do I take? I commit further ſin and ſo I go further off from God, what a caſe am I in? God goes from me, and I from God: if the child ſees the mother going from it, it is not for the child to ſay, my mother is gone yonder, and I will go the other way; no, but the child goes crying after the Mother; and ſo ſhould the Soul ſay, I ſee the Lord is withdrawing his preſence from me, and now it is beſt for me to make after the Lord with all my might; and I am ſure this murmuring humor is not a making after God, but by this I go further and further off from God, and what a diſtance is there like to be between God and me within a little while? Theſe are ſome of the *Reaſonings* and *Pleas* of a murmuring and diſcontented heart. There are many others that we ſhall meet withal, and endeavour to ſpeak to your hearts in them, that ſo this tough humor of diſcontent may (as it were) be cut with the Word and ſoftned with the Word, that ſo it may paſs away: for that is the way of Phyſitians when they meet with a Body that hath any tough humor, then they give that that hath a piercing quality; when there is a tough humor that ſtops the water that it cannot paſs, they give that that hath a piercing quality that may make paſſage for it; and ſo thou haſt need of ſuch things that are piercing to make way through this tough humor that is in the Spirits of

men and women whereby they come to live very uncomfortably to themselves and others, and very dishonourably unto God.

SERMON X. *At* Stepney, *Sept.* 21. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

NOw there are many *Pleas* and *Reasonings* yet remain for there is a great deal of do with a discontented murmuring heart. And I remember I find that the same *Hebrew* word that signifies [*to lodge, to abide,*] it signifies to *Murmur*, they use one word for both, for murmuring is a distemper that doth lodge in men, where it gets in once, it lodgeth, abideth, and continueth, and therefore that we may unlodge it and get it out, we will labour to shew what are the further Reasonings of a discontented heart.

The Fourth *PLEA.*

Methinks I could be content with Gods hand (saith one) *so far as I see the hand of God in a thing I can be content: but when men deal so unreasonably and unjustly with me, I know not how to bear that; I can bear it that I should be in Gods hands, but not in the hands of men; my friends or acquaintance when they deal so unrighteously with me, Oh this goes very hard unto me, that I know not how to bear it from men.*

For the taking away of this Reasoning, First, Though they be men that bring this cross upon you, yet they are God's Instruments, God hath a hand in it, and they can go no further than

than God would have them go. This was that that quieted *David* when *Shimei* curst him, saith he, God hath a hand in it, though *Shimei* be a wicked vile man, yet I look beyond him to God. So, Is there any of your friends that deal injuriously with you, and cross with you? look up to God and see that man but as an instrument in Gods hands.

Secondly, If this be your trouble that men do so wrong you, you are rather to turn your hearts to pity them, than to murmur or be discontented; for the truth is, if you be wronged by other men you have the better of it, *For it is better to bear wrong than to do wrong a great deal*; If they wrong you, if your heart can submit, you are in a better condition than they, because it is better to suffer, than do wrong. I remember it is said of *Socrates* that being very patient when wrong was done to him. thy asked him how he came to be so? Saith he, If I meet with a man in the street that is a diseased man, shall I be vexed and fretted with him because he is diseased? Those that wrong me I look upon them as diseased men, and therefore pity them.

Thirdly, Though you meet with hard dealings from men, yet you meet with nothing but kind good, and righteous dealings from God. When you meet with unrighteous dealings from them, set one against another. And that is for the Answer to the Fourth Plea.

The Fifth PLEA.

Oh! but that affliction that comes upon me is an affliction that I never looke for, I never thought to have met with such an affliction, and that is that I know not how to bear, that is that which makes my heart so disquiet, because it was altogether unlookt for, and unexpected.

For answer to this, First, It is thy weakness and folly that thou didst no look for it and expect it. In *Act.* 20, 22, 23. See what Saint *Paul* saith concerning himself, *And now behold, I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befal me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, That bonds and afflictions abide me.* It is true saith he, I know not the particular affliction that may befall me, but this I know, that the Spirit of God witnesseth, That bonds and afflicti-

ons shall abide me every where, I look for nothing else but bonds and afflictions whersoever I go; so a Christian should do, he should look for afflictions whersoever he is, in all conditions he should look to meet with afflictions, and therefore if any affliction should befal him, though indeed he could not fore-see the particular evil, yet he should think, this is no more than I look'd for in the general. Therefore no affliction should come unexpectedly to a Christian.

A second Answer I shall give is this, Is it unexpected? then the less provision thou madest for it before it came, the more careful shouldest thou be to sanctifie God's Name in it now it is come: It is in this case of afflictions as in mercies, many times a mercy comes unexpected (and that might be a third Answer) to you, set one against the other, I have many mercies that I never look'd for as well as afflictions that I never look'd for: why should not one rejoyce me as well as the other disturbs me? As it is in mercies, when they come unexpected, the less preparation there was in me for receiving mercy, the more need I have to be careful, how to give God the glory of the mercy; and to sanctifie God's Name in the enjoyment of the mercy; Oh so it should be with us now, we have had many mercies, that we never expected, and therefore we were not prepared for them, now we should be so much the more careful to give God the glory of them: so when afflictions come that we did not expect, then it seems we laid not in for them before-hand, we had need be the more careful to sanctifie God's Name in them, we should have spent some pains before to prepare for afflictions, and we did not, then take so much the more pains to sanctifie God in this affliction now. And that is a fifth reasoning.

The Sixth PLEA.

Oh! but it is very great, mine affliction it is exceeding great, saith one, and however you say, we must be contented, it is true, you may say so that feel not such great afflictions, but if you felt my afflictions that I feel, you would think it hard to bear and be content.

To that I answer, Let it be as great an affliction as it will, it is not so great as the sin, *He hath punished thee less than thy sins.*

Secondly,

Secondly, It might have been a great deal more thou mightest have been in Hell: And it is (as I remember S. *Bernards* speech saith he, *It is an easier matter to be oppresst than perish.* Thou mightest have been in Hell, and therefore the greatness of the thing should not make thee murmur, grant it be great.

Thirdly, It may be it is the greater because thy heart doth so murmur: for shackles upon a mans legs if his legs be sore, it will pain him the more; if the shoulder be sore, the burden is the greater: It is because thy heart is so unsound, that thy affliction is great unto thee. And that is the Sixth Reasoning.

The Seventh *PLEA.*

But howsoever you may lessen my affliction, yet I am sure it is far greater than the afflictions of others.

First, It may be it is thy discontent that makes it greater, when (indeed) it is not so in its self.

Secondly, If it were greater than others, why is thy eye evil because the eye of God good? Why shouldest thou be discontented the more, because God is gracious to others?

Thirdly, Is thy affliction greater than others? Then in this thou hast an opportunity to honor God more than others: So thou shouldest consider, Doth God afflict me more than other men? God gives me an opportunity in this to honor him in this affliction more than other men, to exercise more grace than other men; let me labour to do it then.

Fourthly, If all afflictions were laid upon a heap together, it is a notable expression of *Solon* that wise Heathen (saith he) Suppose all the afflictions that are in the World were laid upon an heap, and every man should come and take a proportion of those afflictions, every one equally, there is scarce any man but would rather say, Let me have the afflictions that I had before, or else he were like to come to a greater share, a greater affliction if so be he should be equally share with the whole world; Now for you that are poor (that are not in extremity of poverty) if all the riches in the world were laid together, and you should have an equal share, you would be poorer; but take all afflictions & sorrows whatsoever, if all the sorrows in the world were laid together,

together in an heap, and you had but an equal ſhare of them your portion would be rather more than it is now for the preſent: and therefore do not complain, that it is more than others, ſo as to murmur becauſe of that.

The Eighth *PLEA.*

Another Reaſoning that murmuring hearts have is this, *Why they think that if the affliction were any other than it is, then they would be more contented.*

Firſt, You muſt know that we are not to chooſe our own rod that God will beat us with.

Secondly, It may be if it were any other than in is, it were not ſo fit for thee as this is, it may be therefore God chooſes it, becauſe it is moſt croſs to thee, as ſeeing it is moſt ſuitable for the purging out of that humor that is in thee. If a patient comes to take Phyſick, and finds himſelf ſick by it, ſhall he ſay, Oh! if it were any other potion I could bear it, it may be if it were any other than it is, it would not fit thy diſeaſe; yea if it did not work as it doth, it would not fit thy diſeaſe: ſo when thou ſayeſt of an affliction, if it were any other than it is, thou couldeſt bear it, do but anſwer thy ſelf with this, it may be if it were any other than it is, it would not be fit for me, it would not be right to that ſinful humor that there is in my Soul, and therefore God ſees this to be the fitteſt and the moſt ſutable for me.

Thirdly, Know that this is the excellency of Grace in a Chriſtian, *To be fitted for any condition*; not only to ſay, If it were this or that, but if it be any. As now, a Mariner if he hath skill he would not ſay, if it were any other wind but this, if the wind blow in any point but this, I could tell how to manage my Ship, I could ſhew skill in other points, but not in this; would not Mariners laugh at ſuch an one? it would be a ſhame for him to ſay that he hath skill in any other points but this: So it ſhould be a ſhame for a Chriſtian to ſay, that he hath skill in any other affliction but this: a Chriſtian ſhould be able to manage his Ship if the wind blow any way, to guide his Soul any way.

The fourth and laſt anſwer is this, Know that the Lord hath

rewards

rewards and Crowns for all graces, and for the honouring them in all conditions. It may be in such a way as thou thinkest thou couldest honour God, God hath a Crown for that, and God hath another Crown to set upon the heads of those that honour him in such a way as this is; Yea, he hath several sorts of Crowns, (as I may say) in Heaven, and those Crowns he must put upon some bodies head, and therefore he exercises thee in variety of conditions, that so thou mightest have the several rewards and Crowns that God hath to reward and Crown those that are faithful in several conditions.

The Ninth *PLEA.*

Oh! But the condition that God hath put me in, makes me to be unserviceable, and this troubles me; it is true, if it were only an affliction and trouble to my self, it were not so much, but I am put into such a condition by this affliction as I am unserviceable, and am like to do God no further service God puts me into a mean estate, and what good can I do? and how burdensom is my life to me, because I can do no service to God! and this is grievous to me.

Indeed if it be true that this is thy great grief, it is a good sign If thou canst say as in the presence of God, above all afflictions here in this world to be laid aside and not to be imployed in the service of God, I account that the greatest affliction: I had rather bear any trouble in the world so I might do more service, than to be freed from trouble, and to be laid aside and do little service: canst thou say so? It is a good sign of grace for a man to account afflictions to be great, because he can do the Lord but little service. Few men account that any affliction at all.

But yet there may be a temptation in this. To murmur at Gods dispose when your calling is low and mean, and you can do little service: this many times is a temptation to those that are poor, those that are servants, and those that are of week parts, and are fain to work hard to provide bread for their families, it is many times a grievous burden to them to think, such men the Lord uses in publick service, and I live in an obscure way, and to what purpose is my life?

First,

First, To help againſt this temptation, that thou mayſt not murmur againſt this condition; Do but conſider, though thy condition be low and mean, yet thou art in the Body, thou art a member of the Body though thou beeſt but a mean Member, the Toe, and the Finger hath its uſe in the Body, though it be not the Eye, though it be not the Head, or the Heart, yet it hath its uſe in the Body. And it is an excellent expreſſion. I remember S. *Auſtin* hath about this, (ſaith he) it is bet er to be the meaneſt Member in the Body, than to be the higheſt Member and more excellent and cut off from the Body, it is better to be a little ſprig in the Tree joyned to the Root, than to be an Arm cut off from the Root. Now other men that have but common gifts in the world, that are not Members of Jeſus Chriſt, (indeed) they ſeem to have more excellency than thoſe that are godly, that are in a mean condition, mean parts, mean callings, but they are not of the Body, they are not joyned to the Root, and therefore their condition is worſe. As a great Arm of a Tree when it is cut off it hath a great many leaves upon it, and it ſeems a great deal more glorious than thoſe little ſprigs that are upon the Tree, but the little Sprig is in a better condition? Why? Becauſe joyned to the Tree, and ha.h ſap from the Root, and flouriſheth, but the other will weather and die within a while: So it is with all the men of the world, they be but like great Boughs cut off from the Tree, though they have excellent parts, and have great eſtates and pomp and glory in the world, they have no union with Jeſus Chriſt the Root: But now others that live in a poor condition, a poor Tradesman, a poor ſervant, a poor labouring man that labours for his family every day, yet he being godly, (ſaith he) though I have but little for the preſent, little glory, little credit, little comfort, yet I am joyned to the Body, and there I have ſupply and that that will feed me with comfort, bleſſing and mercy to all eternity: So are all that are in a poor condition in this world if they be Godly, do but think of that; though thou beeſt mean, yet thou art in the body and joyned to the Root, thou art joyned to the principle of comfort, good, bleſſing, and mercy that will hold out to eternity, when thouſand thouſands of glorious pompous men in the world ſhall wither and per-

periſh everlaſtingly, and therefore be not troubled at thy mean condition.

Secondly, Though thou haſt but a mean calling in this world, and ſo art not regarded as a man of uſe, in the world, yet if thou beeſt a Chriſtian, God hath called thee too a higher calling; thy general calling is an high calling, though thy particular calling be but low and mean: And for that you have a place in the Chapter before my Text, *Phil.* 3. 14. *I Preſs towards the mark* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *for the price of the High calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*: So that every Chriſtian hath an high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus, God hath called him to the higheſt thing that he hath called any creature to that he hath made, the Angels in Heaven have not an higher calling than thou haſt. Thou that perhaps ſpendeſt thy time in a poor buſineſs, in the meaneſt calling, if thou beeſt a dung-raker, to rake channels or to cleanſe places of filth or any other thing in the world that is the meaneſt that can be conceived of, thy general calling as a Chriſtian doth avance thee higher than any particular calling can advance any man in the world; others indeed that are called to manage the Affairs of the State, they are in an high Calling, or Miniſters they are in a high Calling, but thine in ſome reſpect is higher. A poor ſervant that muſt be ſcraping all day about poor mean things, many times may have ſuch a temptation as this is, Oh what a poor condition hath God diſpoſed me to! Will God have regard to ſuch an one that is in ſuch a poor low place as I am? Oh yes, Chriſt hath regard to the meaneſt Member; as a man hath as true regard to the Toe if it be in pain, and will tender that as truly and verily as any other member; ſo Chriſt hath regard to his loweſt and meaneſt ones.

Thirdly, thou art in an high calling, though thy outward calling be low in reſpect of men, yet in reſpect of God thou art in the ſame calling with the Angels of Heaven, and in ſome degree called to that that is higher, for the Scripture ſaith that the Angels come to underſtand the Myſtery of the Goſpel by the Church; thou art a Chriſtian in that general calling of thine, thou art joyned with Principalities and Powers and with Angels in the greateſt work that God hath called any cre-

creature to, and therefore let that comfort thee in this.

Fourthly, Thy calling is low and mean, yet be not discontented with that, for thou hast a principle within thee (if thou best a godly man or woman) of Grace that doth raise thy lowest actions to be higher in God's esteem, than all the brave glorious actions that are done in the world; the principle of Faith doth it, for any man or woman to go on in obedience to God in a way of Faith in a calling that God hath set them, (I say doing this through a Principle of Faith) it doth raise this action, and make it a more glorious action than all the glorious Victories of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, than all their Triumphs and glorious pomp that they had in all their conquests, it was not so glorious as for thee to do the lowest action out of Faith, Or, as *Luther* speaks of a poor Milk-maid, and yet being a believer, and doth it in Faith, he compares that action to all the glorious actions of *Cæsar*, and makes that a great deal more eminent and glorious in the eyes of God, therefore Faith raises thy works that are but mean, raises them to be very glorious.

Yea, And the truth is, There is more obedience to submit to God in a low calling, than to submit to him in a higher calling; for it is cleer obedience, meer obedience that makes thee go on in a low calling; but there may be much self love that makes men go on in a higher calling, for there is Riches, Credit, and account in the world, and rewards comes in by that, which doth not in the other: to go on quietly in a low calling is more obedience to God.

Fifthly, Know further in the last place, There is like to be more reward: For the Lord when he comes to reward he doth not come to examine what the work hath been that men and women have been exercised in, but what their faithfulness hath been, *Well done good and faithful Servant*, saith the Lord, he doth not say, well done good servant for thou hast been faithful to me in publick work, ruling Cities and States, and Affairs in Kingdoms, and therefore thou shalt be rewarded, No, but, *Well done good and faithful Servant*, now thou hast been *faithful* in little as well as others are in more, by going on and finishing thy days labor, when thou getteth but a couple of shillings

lings to maintain thy family, thou mayeſt be as faithful in this as thoſe are that rule a Kingdom; now God looks to a mans faithfulneſs, and thou mayeſt have as great a reward for thy faithfulneſs that art a poor Servant in the Kitchen all the day, as another that ſits upon the Throne all day, and as great a Crown of glory thou mayeſt have at the day of Judgement, as a King that ſits upon the Throne, that hath ruled for God upon his Throne; yea, thy faithfulneſs may be rewarded by God with as great Glory, as a King that hath ſwayed his Scepter for God; becauſe (I ſay) the Lord doth not ſo much look at the work that is done, as at the faithfulneſs of our hearts in doing it, then why ſhould not every one of us go on comfortably and cheerfully in our low condition, for why may not I be faithful as well as another? It is true, I cannot come to be as rich a man, and as honourable as others, but I may be as faithful as any other man, that every one of you may conclude with your ſelves: What doth let but that you that are the pooreſt and meaneſt, may be as faithful as the greateſt; yea, you may have as glorious a Crown in Heaven, and therefore go on comfortably and cheerfully in your way.

The Tenth *PLEA*.

There is another Reaſoning that ſome may have, and that is this. *Oh! I could bear much affliction in ſome other way, but this is very grievous to me; the unſettledneſs of my condition; though my condition were but low, yet if it were in a ſettled way I could be content, but it is ſo unconſtant, and ſo unſettled, that I can never know what to truſt to, but am toſt up and down in the world in an unſettled condition, and this is hard to be content with.*

Now to that, I anſwer, Firſt, that the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *That every man in his ſettled eſtate is vanity*, in *Pſal.* 36. 5. Your Books have it, Every man at his *beſt eſtate* is vanity, the word is his *ſettled eſtate*; you think if you were but ſettled; Oh then you could be content, but the truth is, man in his ſettled eſtate is vanity.

Secondly, I anſwer thus, That perhaps God ſees it is better for thee to live in a continual dependance upon him, and not to

know what condition ſhall be on the morrow, than for thee to have a more ſettled condition in reſpect of the comforts of the creature; do but remember that we ſpake of before, that Chriſt doth not teach you to pray, Lord, give me enough that will ſerve me for two or three years, but, *this day our daily bread*; to teach us we muſt live upon God in a dependent condition every day for daily bread. Here was the difference that is obſervable between the Land of *Canaan* and *Egypt*, the Land of *Canaan* that depended upon God for the watering of it with ſhowers from Heaven, but *Egypt* had a conſtant way of watering the Country, that did not ſo much depend upon Heaven for water, but upon the River *Nylus*, which did at ſome certain time overflow the Country: and they knowing that the watering of their Country did depend upon that River, and not upon Heaven they grew more proud: and therefore the Scripture to expreſs *Pharaoh*'s pride, brings him in ſaying, *The river is mine*: he could order the River as he pleaſed, for it was his *Canaan*, which was a Country which was to depend upon God, though they had rain at one time, yet they knew not whether they ſhould have it at another time, and lived always in a dependence upon God not knowing what ſhould become of them, Now God thought this to be better Land for his people than *Egypt*, and this is given as one reaſon among others for it, becauſe the Lord look'd upon this as more ſutable to the ſtate of his people that were to live by faith, to be continually depending upon Heaven, upon Himſelf, and not to have a conſtant ſettled way in the creature for their outward dependence. And we find it by experience that when thoſe that are godly live in the greateſt dependence upon God, & have not ſettled comings in from the creature, they do exerciſe Faith more, and are in a better condition for their Souls than before. Oh! many times it falls out that the worſe thy outward eſtate is, the better thy ſoul is, and the better thy outward eſtate is, the worſe thy ſoul is. We read in *Ezra* 4. 13. the objection that the enemies had againſt the people of *Iſrael* building of the wall of the City: the writing to *Artaxerxes* againſt them, ſaith, *Be it known unto the King, that if the City be builded, and the walls ſet up again, then they will not pay toll tribute, and cuſtom: and ſo thou ſhalt endamage the revenue of the*

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Kings. If the wall be built (ſay they) then they will refuſe to pay toll, tribute, and cuſtom to the King: that is thus, ſo long as they live in ſuch a condition, where they have dependence wholly upon the King, and lie at the Kings mercy, that is, they are in no City that hath walls built, but the King may come upon them when he will, ſo long they will pay cuſtom to the King, but if once they come to build a wall, and can defend themſelves, and have not their dependence upon the King as before, then they will deny paying toll, tribute, and cuſtom. So it is thus for all the world between God and mens Souls; when a Soul lives in a way of meer dependence upon God, that ſenſibly he ſees God hath him at advantage every moment, Oh then ſuch a Soul will pay toll and cuſtom, that Soul exerciſes Faith, and begs every day his daily bread: but if God hedges that man about with an eſtate, with proſperity, perhaps he hath an inheritance befallen him, perhaps he hath a conſtant Office that brings in ſo much yearly to him duly paid, this man is not ſo ſenſible now of his dependence upon God, he begins now to pay leſs toll and cuſtom to God than before; God hath leſs ſervice from this man now than before; God ſees it better for his people to live in a depending condition: we are very loath in reſpect of God to be dependent, we would all be Independents this way, we would be of our ſelves, and have no dependence upon the Lord, but God ſees it better for us to live in a depending condition.

Further, This may be thy comfort, though for outward things thou art mightily unſettled, yet for the great things of thy Soul and eternal eſtate there thou art ſettled, there thou haſt a ſettled way, and a conſtant way of fetching ſupply, *Of his fulneſs we receive grace for grace,* thou haſt there abundance of treaſure to go to, and fetch all that thou ſtandeſt in need of and obſerve it that now thy condition is more ſettled in the Covenant of grace than it was in the Covenant of works; in the Covenant of works there God gave men a ſtock to trade with, but he put it in his own hand, ſo that he might trade and get or loſe; but now in the Covenant of Grace God makes ſure, the ſtock is kept in the hand of Chriſt, and we muſt go to him for ſupply continually, for Chriſt keeps the ſtock; perhaps

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we may trifle away ſomewhat in our trading, but God takes that care ſtill we ſhould never ſpend the ſtock: As a man when his Son breaks, having ſquandred away his ſtock that he gave him before, afterwards he puts his ſtock into a friends hand, and ſaith he, you ſhall keep his ſtock and it ſhall not be at his diſpoſe; ſo we are in a more ſettled condition in reſpect of our eternal eſtate than *Adam* was in innocency; therefore let that comfort us in all our unſettled conditions in the matters of the world.

The Eleventh *PLEA*.

But yet there is another reaſoning that many murmuring hearts think to feed their humor withal, (ſay they) *If I never had been in a better condition, then I could bear this affliction, if God had always kept me in ſo low a condition, I could be content, Oh but there was a time that I poſſeſſed more, and I had things at a more full hand, and therefore now it is harder to me to brought low, as in theſe times, perhaps a man that had five or ſix hundred a year, but now hath had nothing for a great while, if that man had not been born to ſo much, or never had proſpered in any higher degree than now he is in, this affliction had been leſs, perhaps he hath ſome money and friends to live upon, but if he had never been in a higher condition, he would not have accounted it ſo great a matter to have been without it now; This many times is our greateſt wound that once we were in a better condition: and this is the moſt unreaſonable thing for us to murmur upon this ground of any.*

For firſt, Is thy eye evil, becauſe God hath been good to thee heretofore? It is an ill thing for us to have our eye evil, becauſe God is good to others, but to look upon our condition with an evil eye now, becauſe God was once good to us; hath God done thee any wrong becauſe he was formerly more good to thee than he was to others?

Secondly, Didſt thou heretofore proſper? Did God heretofore give thee more proſperity? it was to prepare thee for afflictions; we ſhould look at all our outward proſperity as a preparation to afflictions if thou hadſt done ſo, then it would not have been ſo difficult for thee to have endured affliction now when thou hadſt a great eſtate, yet if thou hadſt made uſe of this mercy of God to prepare thee for thy afflicted eſtate, then

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the change of thy estate would not be so grievous. That every Christian should do, have I an Estate now? I should prepare for poverty. Have I health now? I should prepare for sickness. Have I liberty; let me prepare my self for imprisonment: What know I what God may call me to? Have I comfort and peace now in my conscience? Doth God shine upon thee? While I have this let me prepare for God's withdrawing from me. Am I delivered from temptations? Let me prepare now for the time of temptations; if thou wouldest do so, the change of thy condition would not be so grievous to thee. Mariners that are in a calm will prepare for storms: would they say, if we never had calms, we would bear storms? But now we have had calms so many years or weeks together, this is grievous: in thy calm thou art to prepare for storms, and the storm would be less; thou shouldest reason quite contrary, and say, Now I am in an afflicted condition! O but blessed be God, *I was in a comfortable condition*, and blessed be God that he was aforehand with me in the ways of his mercy, this one consideration may help murmuring hearts. Dost thou murmur because once thou wert better? Know God was beforehand with thee in the ways of mercy, thou shouldest rather think thus, I have lived for these many years (fourty years perhaps or more) in a comfortable condition, I have lived in health, and peace, and plenty, what though the remaining part of my time hath some sorrow and affliction? the Lord hath granted to me a comfortable Sun-shine all the day long till towards evening, and what if at seven or eight a clock at night it begins to rain? Let me thank God I have had so fair weather all day. You that are going a Voyage, if you have a comfortable wind, and very fair for many months together, what if you have a little storm when you are within sight of Land, will you murmur and repine? O, No, but rather bless God that you have had such a comfortable Voyage so long: O this consideration would help us all! if it were so that now God should say, Well, You shall never see comfortable day more for outward things in this world; O then you have cause to fall down and bless God's Name, that you have had so many comfortable days: now you reason quite contrary, whereas you should bless God that you have had so much

comfort,

comfort, you make what you have had before to be an aggravation of your afflictions now, and so murmur and are discontented. That which God gave you before, upon what terms did you hold it? Did you hold it so as you have in your writings, *To have and to hold for ever*, God gives no such thing; God gives to no man (I say) any thing but Grace to run upon that tenor, there is no such thing in all God's writings for any outward comforts, *To have and to hold for you and yours heirs*; indeed for Grace he doth give it to your selves, *To have and to hold for ever*; though not for every one that comes out of your Loyns to have and to hold for ever; God doth not give any outward thing so upon any such tenour as that is; if God gives me an understanding of himself, and faith and humility, and love, and patience, and such Graces of his Spirit, he gives them me for ever; if he gives me Himself, and his Christ, and his Promise, and his Covenant, he gives me them for ever; what am I therefore that the Sun should always shine upon me; that I must have fair weather all my days? That which God gives to me, he gave it to me as a pledge of his love, let me return it to him as a pledge of my obedience, there is all the Reason in the world for it: all that a Godly man recieves from God, he receives it as a pledge of God's love to him; therefore when he comes into an afflicted condition, saith God, Return to me as a pledge of your obedience that you had from me a pledge of my love we should cheerfully come in to God, & bless God that we have any thing to render unto him as a pledge of our obedience, and say, O it is thy love, O Lord, that hath given us any thing, that doth enable us to render a pledge of our obedience to thee. When God calls for thy estate, or any comforts that thou hast, God calls for it as a pledge of thy obedience to him.

The Twelfth *PLEA*.

Another reasoning of a murmuring heart is this. *Oh but after I have taken a great deal of pains for such a comfort, yet then I am crost in it, after a great deal of labour and pains that I have taken, now to be crost, Oh this goes very hard!*

First, I answer, The greater cross, the more obedience and submission.

Secondly,

Secondly, When thou didst take a great deal of pains, was it not with submission to God? Didst thou take pains with resolutions, that thou must have such a thing when thou laboureſt for it? Then know that thou laboureſt not as a Christian, but if thou didst labour and take pains, was it not with resignation to God? Lord, I am taking pains in the way of my calling, but with submission, I depend wholly upon thee for success & a blessing: And what was it that thou didst aim at in thy labour? Was it not that thou mightest walk with God in the place that God had set thee? A Christian should do so in his outward calling, I am diligent in my outward calling, but it is, that I might obey God in it; it is true I do it that I might provide for my Family, but the cheif thing that I aim at is, That I might yeild obedience to God in the way that God hath set me: Now if God call thee to another condition to obey him in, though it be by suffering, thou wilt do it if thy heart be right.

Thirdly, There will be the more Testimony of thy love to God, if so be thou shalt now yield up thy self to God in that that cost thee dear. Shall I offer that to God (saith *David*) that cost me nothing? Thy outward comforts have cost thee much, and thou hast taken much pains to obtain them, and now if thou canst submit to God in the want of them: (I say) in this thy love is the more shown, that thou canst offer that to God that cost thee dear. Now these are the principal reasonings of a discontented heart.

The Thirteenth *PLEA*.

There is one *Plea* more that may be named, and that is this; say some, *Though I confess my affliction is some what hard, and I feel some trouble within me, yet I thank God I break not out in discontented ways to the dishonour of God, I keep in, although I have much ado with my own heart.*

Oh! do not satisfie your selves with that, for the distempers of your hearts, and their sinful workings are as words before God, *My soul be silent to God*, That we spake of in the beginning

of the opening of this Scripture, it is not enough for thy tongue to be silent; but thy soul must be silent, there may be a sullen discontentedness of heart, as well as a discontentedness manifested in words; and if thou dost but mortifie that inward sullenness, if thou beest afflicted a little more, it will break forth at last.

And thus the Lord, I hope hath met with the cheif *Reasonings* and *Pleas* for our discontent in our conditions. I beseech you in the name of God, consider of these things, and because they do concern your own heart, you may so much the better remember them; I had thought to have made a little Entrance into the next Head, and that is some way of helping you to this grace of Contentment. It is a most excellent Grace, of admirable use, as you have heard; and the contrary is very sinful and vile.

SERMON XI. *At* Stepney, *October.* 21. 1645.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

NOw we are coming to the close of this point of *Contentment*, that Jesus Christ doth teach those that are in his School: we have opened the point unto you and shewed you wherein the Art, and Skill, and Mystery of Christian Contentment lies: and divers things in the way of application rebuking the want of this; and the last day I finished that point of shewing the several Reasonings of a murmuring and discontented heart. I shall now (as being desirous to make an end) leave what was said, and proceed to what re-

remains. There are onely these two things for the working of your hearts to this Grace of Christian Contentment,

First, The propounding of several *Considerations*, for the contenting of the Heart in any afflicted condition.

Secondly, The propounding of *Directions*, what shall be done for the working of our hearts unto this.

The First *Consideration*

We should consider (in all our wants and inclinations to discontent) *The greatness of the mercies that we have, and the meanness of the things that we want.* The things we want,) if we be godly) they are things of very small moment in comparison of the things we have, and the things we have are things of very great moment; for the most part, that that people are discontent and murmur for the want of, it is, because they have not such things as Reprobates have, or may have; why shouldest thou be troubled so much for the want of that that a man or woman may have, and yet be a Reprobate, as that thy estate is not so great, thy health not so perfect, thy credit not so much, thou mayest have all those things, and yet be a Reprobate now, wilt thou be discontent for that that a Reprobate may have? I shall give you the example of a couple of godly men meeting together, *Anthony* and *Didymus*, *Didymus* was blind, and yet a man of very excellent parts and graces, *Anthony* ask'd him if he was not troubled at this his want of sight, he confest he was, but (saith he) shall you be tronbled at the want of what flies and dogs have, and not rather rejoyce and be thankful that you have what Angels have? God hath given you those good things that makes Angels glorious, is not that enough to you, though you want what thing a flie hath? And so a Christian should reason the case with himself, What am I discontented for? I am discontented for want of that that a Dog may have, that a Devil may have, that a Reprobate may have; shall I be discontented for not having that, when as God hath given me that that makes Angels glorious? *Blessed be God* (saith the Apostle in *Eph.* 1. 4.) *That hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places.* It may be thou hast not so great blessings

inearthly places as ſome others have, but if the Lord hath bleſſed thee in Heavenly places, that ſhould content thee; there is bleſſings in Heaven, and he hath ſet thee here for the preſent as it were in Heaven, in a Heavenly place; The conſideration of the greatneſs of the mercies that we have, and the littleneſs of the things that God hath denied us, is a very powerful conſideration to work this Grace of Contentment.

The Second *Conſideration.*

The Conſideration, *That God is beforehand with us with his mercies, ſhould content us* (I ſpake to this as an aggravation of our diſcontent, but now I ſhall uſe it as a conſideration to help us to Contentment) Thou wanteſt many comforts now, but hath not God been beforehand with thee heretofore? Oh, thou haſt had mercy enough already to wake thee ſpend all the ſtrength thou haſt, and time thou ſhalt live, to bleſs God for what thou haſt had already. I remember I have read of a good man that had liv'd to fifty years of age, and enjoyed his health for eight and fourty years exceeding well, and liv'd in proſperity, and the two laſt years his body was exceedingly diſeaſed, he had the Strangury, and was in great pain; but he reaſoned the caſe with himſelf thus; Oh Lord, thou mighteſt have made all my life to have been a life of torment and pain, but thou haſt let me have eight and fourty years in health: I will praiſe thy mercies for what I have had, and will praiſe thy Juſtice for what now I feel. O, it is a good conſideration for us to think, that God is beforehand with us in the way of mercy: Suppoſe God ſhould now take away your eſtate from ſome of you that have lived comfortably a great while, you will ſay, That aggravates our miſery that we had eſtates; but it is through thy unthankfulneſs that it doth ſo; we ſhould bleſs God for what we have had, and not think that we are worſe becauſe we have had thus and thus, we might have been always miſerable, and certainly, that mans condition is not very miſerable that hath no other greater aggravation of his miſery, but becauſe once he was happy: If there be nothing elſe to make you miſerable, that is no ſuch aggravation but that thou mayeſt bear it, for there is much mercy

cy in that thou hadst once, and therefore let that content thee.

The Third *Consideration.*

The Consideration of the abundance of mercies that God bestows, and we enjoy. It is a speech of *Luther*, (saith he) the Sea of Gods mercy should swallow up all our paticular afflictions, name any affliction that is upon thee, there is a Sea of mercy to swallow it up. If you pour a pail full of water on the floor of your house, it makes a great shew, but if you throw it into the Sea, there is no appearance of it; so afflictions considered in themselves, we think they are very great, but let them be considered with the Sea of Gods mercies we do enjoy, then they are not so much, they are nothing in comparison.

The Fourth *Consideration.*

Consider the way of God towards all creatures, God carries on all creatures in a vicissitude of several conditions; as thus we have not always Summer, but Winter succeed Summer: we have not always Day, but Day and Night: we have not always fair weather, but fair and foul; the vegetative creatures do not always flourish, but the sap is in the root, and they seem as if they were dead there is a vicissitude of all things in the World: the Sun doth not shine always to us here, but there is darkness comes after light; now seeing God hath so ordered things with all creatures that there is a mixture of conditions; why should we think it much that there should be a vicissitude of conditions with us, sometimes in a way of prosperity, and sometimes in a way of affliction?

The fifth *Consideration.*

A further Consideration is this, *The Creatures do suffer for us why should not we be willing to suffer, to be serviceable to God?* God subjects other creatures, they are fain to lose their lives for us, to lose what ever beauty and excellency they have to be serviceable to us, why should not we be willing to part with any thing

thing in way of ſervice to God; certainly there is not ſo great a diſtance between other Creatures and Man-kind, as there is between Man-kind and God. 'Tis an expreſſion of that Martyr M. *Hooper*, that we read of in the Book of Martyrs, in labouring to work his own heart, and the hearts of others to contentedneſs in the midſt of his ſufferings; he hath this ſimilitude, and you may be put in mind of that every day, (ſaith he) I look upon the creature, and ſee what it ſuffers to be uſeful to me: as thus, The bruit beaſts muſt die, muſt be roaſted in the fire, and boyl'd, muſt come upon the trencher, be hack'd all in pieces, muſt be chewed in the mouth, and in the ſtomack turn'd to that which is loathſom, if one ſhould behold it, and all to nouriſh me, to be uſeful to my body; and ſhall not I be willing to be made any thing for God, for his Service; what abundance of alterations the creature comes under to be made uſeful for me, to preſerve me; then if God will do ſo with me for his uſe, as he doth ſubject the creatures to me for my uſe, why ſhould not I reſt contented? If God will take away my eſtate, and make me poor; If God will take away my life, hack me in pieces, put me in priſon, whatſoever he doth, yet I ſhall not ſuffer more for God than the creature doth for me; and ſurely I am infinitely more bound to God than the creatures to me; and there is not ſo much diſtance between me and the creature, as between me and God: ſuch Conſiderations as theſe wrought the heart of that Martyr to contentedneſs in his ſufferings. And every time the creature is upon your trenchers, you may think, What! doth God make the creature ſuffer for my uſe? not onely for my nouriſhment, but for my delight; what am I then in reſpect of the infinite God?

The Sixth *Conſideration.*

Another Conſideration for the working of Contentment, it is, *To conſider that we have but a little time in this world.* If thou beeſt godly, thou ſhalt never ſuffer but onely in this world; why, do but ſhut your eyes, and preſently another life is to come, as that Martyr ſaid to his fellow Martyr, Do but ſhut your eyes, (ſaith he) and the next time they are opened, you ſhall be in another

another World. *Athanasius* saith, it is but a little cloud (when he was banished) and it will be over (notwithstanding) presently. These afflictions they are but for a moment. A Mariner when he is abroad, doth not think it much if a storm arises, especially if he can see the Heavens clear beyond it, saith he it will be over presently. Consider we have not long to live, it may be it may be over before our days be at an end, but suppose it should not, death will put an end to all, all afflictions and troubles will soon be at an end by death.

The Seventh *Consideration.*

Consider the condition that others have been in that have been our betters. We made some use of that before, to shew the evil of discontentment: But further for to work this upon our hearts it is a mighty argument to work upon our hearts a contentedness in any condition.

Thou many times dost consider who are above thee, but consider who are under thee.

Jacob that was the heir of *Abraham* and *Isaac*; for the blessing was upon him, and the promise ran along in him, yet was in a poor mean condition. *Abraham* that was his Grandfather, was able to make a kind of Army of his own household, 300 to fight with a King, yet *Jacob* his Grand-child he goes over *Jordan* with a staff, and lies in a very poor and mean condition for a long time: and *Moses* that might have had all the treasures in *Egypt*, and as some Historians say of him, *Pharaohs* Daughter adopted him for her Son, because *Pharaoh* had no heir for the Crown, and so he was like to have come to the Crown, yet what a low condition did he live in when he went to live with *Jethro* his Father in Law 40 years to gether? afterward when he returned to *Egypt*, he and his wife and children, and all that he had and yet he had but one beast to carry him to *Egypt*, he went in a mean condition when he went from his Father in Law to *Egypt* back again.

And *Elijah* we know how he was fed with Ravens, and how he was fain to shift for his life from time to time, and run into the wilderness up and down, and so did *Elisha*, he was divers times

times in a very low condition, the Prophets of God they were to be hid in a cave by *Obadiah*, and there to be fed with bread and water, and the Prophet *Jeremiah* put into a Dungeon, and Oh how was he vexed! and it were an endless thing to name the particulars of the great sufferings of the people of God, in former time we have sometimes made use of this Argument other ways. The great Instruments of God in the first Reformation they lived in great straights, in a very low condition, even *Luther* himself when he was to die (saith he) Lord (though he were a man of such publick use, and was a great man in the Courts of Princes) Lord, I have neither House nor Lands, nor estate to leave any thing to Wife or Children, but I commit them to thee: and so *Musculus* that was a very choice instrument of God in his time, though he was a man that was worth even a Kingdom for excellency of his spirit and learninng, for he was one of the learnedst men of his time, yet sometimes he was put to dig in the common ditch to get bread for his family. What would we do if we were in such a condition as these men were? But above all, set Christ before us, that professes that the Birds of the Air had nests, and the Foxes had holes, yet the Son of man had no place to hide his head in, that low condition he was in the consideration of such things as these are very useful. It is likewise useful for men and women of estates to go to poor peoples houses, and see how they live, to go to Hospitals, and to see the wounds of Souldiers and others, and to see the lamentable condition that people live in, that live in some Alms-houses, and what poor they have, and what straights they are put to; you hear sometimes of them, but if you went to see them, it would not only stir up charity in your selves towards them, but stir up thankfulness in your hearts towards God, it would be a special means to help you against any discontent, you would go away and be cause to bless God, and say, if I were in such a condition as they are in, what should I do? how could I bear it? And yet what reason is there that God doth so order and dispose of things, that they should be so low in their estates, and I so high: I know no Reason but free Grace, God will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy. These are some good Considerations for the furtherance of Contentment.

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The Eighth *Consideration.*

A further Consideration may be this, *That before your conversion, before God wrought upon your souls, you were contented then with the World without Grace, though you had no interest in God nor Christ, why cannot you now be contented with Grace and spiritual things without the World?* If you your selves were content with the world without grace, there is reason you should be content with grace without the world; Certainly, there is infinitely more reason. Yea, you may see that many men of the world have a kind of Contentment, do not murmur nor repine when the world comes, though they have no interest in God and Christ; Then canst not thou have as much Contentment with God and Christ without the world, as they can with the world without God and Christ? This is an infinite shame it should be so.

The Ninth *Consideration.*

Yea consider, when God hath given thee such Contentment, thou hast not given him the glory, When God hath let thee have thy hearts desire, what hast thou done with thy hearts desire? thou hast not been the better for it, it may be thou hast been the worse many times, and therefore let that satisfie thee I meet with crosses, but when I had Contentment, and all things coming in, God had but little or no glory from me, and therefore let that be a means now to quiet me in my discontented thoughts.

The Tenth *Consideration.*

Yea lastly, Consider all the experience that you have had, of Gods doing good unto you in the want of many comforts, when God crosses you, have you never had experience of abundance of good in afflictions? It is true, when a Minister only tells men that God will work good out of their afflictions, they hear them speak, and think they speak like good men but they feel little or no good, they feel nothing but pain; but when we cannot onely say to you, that God hath said he will

work good out of your afflictions, but we can say to you, that you your selves have found it so by experience, that God hath made former afflictions to be great benefits to you, & that you would not have been without them, or without the good that came by them for a world; such experiences will exceedingly quiet the heart, and work it to Contentment: therefore think thus with thy self, Lord, why may not this affliction work as great a good upon me as afflictions have done heretofore? Perhaps you may find many other Considerations besides in your own meditations, these are the principal ones that I have thought upon: I'll only add one word more to this, of one that once was a great Merchant and Trades-man, and it happened on a time that he suffered Ship-rack, and saith he, I never made a better voyage, and sail'd better then at that time that I suffered Ship-rack: this was a strange speech (his name was *Zeno*) that he should never make a beter voyage: it would be a strange paradox to you that are Mariners, to say, that's a good voyage whenwe suffer Ship-rack: but he ment, because he got so much good by it, God was pleased to bless it so far to him, that he gained so much unto his soul by it, so much soul-riches, that he made account it was the best voyage that ever he had: and truly, sometimes it is so, yea, to you that are godly, I make no question but you find it so, that your worst voyages have proved your best, when you have met with the greatest crosses in a voyage, God hath been pleased to turn them to a greater good to you in some other way. It's true, we may desire crosses that they may be turned to other advantages; but when God in his providence doth so order things that you meet with ill voyages, you may expect that God wil turn them to a greater good, and those that have been exercised in the ways of Godliness any long time, I make not question but they have abundance of experience that they have gained by them: You know sometimes it is better to be in a little ship, for they have advantage of the greater ones in storms, many times in a storm a little Ship can thrust into a shallow place, and so be safe, but your great Ships cannot, they must be abroad and tost up and down in the storm and tempest, and so many times split against the rock. And so it may be God sees there is a

storm

ſtorms coming, and if thou beeſt in thy great Ship, thou mayeſt be ſplit upon rocks and ſands, God therefore doth put thee into a leſſer veſſel that thou mayſt be more ſafe. We will lay aſide the ſpeaking of thoſe conſiderations now, but I would not have you lay them aſide, and put them out of your thoughts, but labour (thoſe eſpecially that moſt concern you) to make uſe of them in the needful time when you find any diſcontentedneſs of ſpirit to ariſe in you.

But the main thing that I intend for this exerciſe, It is propounding Directions what to do for the helping of our hearts to contentment. For as for any further conſiderations we have prevented the ſpeaking largely of them, becauſe we have opened the moſt things in ſhewing what the leſſons are that Chriſt teaches men, when he brings them into his School, to teach them this Art. I ſay there we have ſpoken of the ſpecial things that are moſt conſiderable for the helping of us to the Grace of Contentment. Therefore now all that I ſhall further do about this point, ſhall be giving of ſome Directions what courſe to take that we may come to attain this Grace of Contentment.

The Firſt *Direction.*

The Firſt is this, All the rules and helps in the World will do us little good except we get a good temper within our Hearts; you can never make a ſhip go ſteady with propping of it without, you know there muſt be ballaſt within the Ship, that muſt make it go ſteady: And ſo there is nothing without us that can keep our hearts in a ſteady conſtant way but that which is within us, Grace is within the ſoul, and that will do it.

The Second *Direction.*

Secondly, If you would get a contented life, do not gripe too much of the world, do not take in more of the buſineſs of the world than God calls you to, be not greedy of taking in a great deal of the World, if any man will go among Thorns when he may go in a plainer way, there is no reaſon that this

man ſhould complain that he is prick'd with them; thou goeſt among Thorns, it is thy way? Muſt you of neceſſity go among them? Then it is another matter, but if thou wilt electively chuſe that way when thou mayſt go another, then thou haſt no cauſe to complain; ſo for men and women that put themſelves upon things of the world that they need not, then no marvail though they be prick'd, and meet with that that doth diſquiet them; For ſuch is the Nature of all things here in the world, that every thing hath ſome prick or other in it, we are like to meet with diſappointments and diſcontentments in every thing we meddle with, and therefore thoſe that have leaſt to do in the world, (that is except God call them to it: we muſt put in that) they are like to meet with many things that will diſcontent them.

The Third *Direction.*

Thirdly, Beſure of thy call to every buſineſs thou goeſt about, though it be in the leaſt buſineſs, be ſure of thy call to it; than whatever thou meeteſt withal, thou mayſt quiet thy heart with this, I know I am where God would have me; there is nothing in the world will quiet the heart ſo much as this; when I meet with any croſſes, I know I am where God would have me in my place and calling, I am about the work that God hath ſet me; O this will quiet and content thee when thou meeteſt with trouble: that that God calls a man to, with that he may have comfort whatever befalls him, God is to look to thee, and to ſee thee bleeſt, if thou beeſt in thy work God calls thee to.

The Fourth *Direction.*

And eſpecially if I add a fourth Rule, and that is, *That I walk by rule in that work I am called to.* I am called to ſuch a buſineſs, but I muſt manage this work that I am called to by Rule, I muſt walk by the word, order my ſelf in this buſineſs according to Gods mind ſo far as I am able, then add this to the other, and then the quiet and the peace of that ſoul may be made even perfect in a kind, when I know it is not the work I put my ſelf upon, but God hath called me to it, and I walk by

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the rule of the World in it, then let come what will come, God he is to take care of me there. It was a ſpeech of a Heathen, (ſaith he) if thou wilt ſubject all things to thy ſelf, do thou ſubject thy ſelf to reaſon, and by that thou wilt make all things to be under thee; I may add a little more to it, if you will ſubject all things under you, ſubject your ſelf to God, and then the truth is, all things are under you; It hath been that which many times we have hinted, the reaſon why many among us are ſo ſlaviſh, is, becauſe they are willing to be ſlaves themſelves under ſome above them, ſo they may keep their neighbours under to be ſlaves to them: for you know any great man in the Country, can cruſh any poor man that he is angry withal. If there were an Arbitrary Goverment, then all thoſe that would be willing to be Vaſſals and Slaves to the Prince, they can make all others Vaſſals and Slaves under them. Now be thou willing to be a vaſſal and ſlave to God, to be abſolutely under Gods command, and then (I ſay) all things in the world are under thee, *All are yours* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *Life and Death* every thing is yours, and you are Chriſts; and Chriſt is Gods: All things in the world are ſerviceable to that man or woman that is ſerviceable to God It is a mighty commendation of Gods ſervice, be thou willing to be ſerviceable to God, and God makes all things in the world to be thy ſervants, for ſo they are. You will ſay, How are they my Servants? I cannot command them; They are ſervants in this, that God doth order them all to work for thy good, there is nothing in the World but (ſaith God) it ſhall work for thy good, and be ſerviceable to thee, if thou wilt be ſerviceable to me; who would not be now Gods Servant? Subject thy ſelf to God, and all things ſhall be ſubjected to thee. Now, ſo long as we keep within our bounds, we are under protection, but if once we break our bounds, we muſt expect it ſhould be with us as it is with the Deer in the Park; while the Deer keep within the paile, there are no Dogs come upon them, but they can feed qnietly, but let the Deer be got without the pale, and then every Dog in the Countrey will be hunting after them: So it is with men, let men and women keep within the bounds of the Command of

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God, or the rule that God hath ſet them in his word, and then they are protected by God, and they may go about their buſineſs with peace, and never be troubled for any thing, but caſt all their care upon God, God provides for them; but if they will go beyond the pale, if they will paſs their bounds, then they may expect to meet with troubles and afflictions, and diſcontent; and therefore that is a fourth direction. Walk by rule.

The Fifth *Direction.*

A Fifth Rule is this, *Exerciſe much faith, that is the way for contentedneſs.* After thou haſt done with all conſideration that reaſon may ſuggeſt to thee, if thou findeſt that theſe do not do it, O then call for the grace of Faith, a man may go very far with the uſe of reaſon alone to help him to Contentment: but when reaſon is at a *non-plus*, then ſet faith at work. It was a ſpeech of that Reverend Divine Maſter *Perkins* that God made ſo inſtrumental in his time, the life of Faith (ſaith he) it is a true life indeed, the only Life. Exerciſe Faith not only in that promiſe that all ſhall work together for good to them that fear God, but likewiſe exerciſe Faith in God himſelf, as well as in his word in the Attributes of God. It was a ſpeech of *Socrates* a Heathen, (ſaith he) ſince God is ſo careful for you, what need you be careful for any thing your ſelves; It was a ſtrange ſpeech of a Heathen.

O Chriſtian! if thou haſt any Faith, in the time of extremity, think thus, This is the time that God calls for the exerciſe of faith, what canſt thou do with thy faith if thou canſt not quiet thy heart in diſcontent? It was the ſpeech of one *Dionyſius* that had been a King, and afterwards was brought to ſuch a low condition to get his living be being a School-Maſter, one come & asks him, What have you got by your Philoſophy from *Plato* and others? What have I got (ſaith he,) I have got this, That though my condition be changed from ſo high a condition to ſo low, yet I have got this, I can be content. So what doſt thon get by being a Believer, a Chriſtian? what canſt thou do by thy Faith? I can do this, I can in all eſtates caſt my care upon God, caſt my burden upon God, I can commit my way to God in peace; faith

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can do this Therefore when reason can go no higher, let faith get upon the shoulders of reason, and say, I see land though reason cannot see it, I see good that will come out of all this evil.

Exercise faith in thy often resignation of thy self to God, in giving of thy self up to God and his ways, the more thou dost in a beliving way surrender up thy self to God, the more quiet and peace wilt thou have; that is the fifth thing.

The Sixth *Directions.*

The sixth Direction for Contentment is, *To labour to be spiritually minded*; that is, be often in meditation of the things that that are above, *If we be risen with Christ* (saith the Scripture) *let us seek the things that are above, where Christ is that sits at the right hand of God*, Col. 3. 1. Be much in spiritual thoughts, in conversing with things above; many Christians that have an interest in the things of Heaven, yet converse but very little with them, their meditations are not much upon Heavenly things. It is that that some give as the reason why *Adam* did not see his nakedness, some think that he had so much converse with God, and with things above sense, that he did not so much as mind or think of nakedness what it was: but whether that were so or no, I will not say, but this I say, and am certain of, the reason why we are so troubled with our nakedness, with any wants that we have, it is because we converse so little with God, so little with spiritual things, the conversing with spiritual things would lift us above the things of the World; Those that are bit or stung with a snake, it is because they tread upon the ground: if they could be lifted above the earth, they need never fear to be stung with the Snakes that are crawling underneath: so I may compare the sinful distemper of murmuring, and the temptations and evils that come from thence to be like Snakes that crawl up and down below, but if we could get higher, we should not be stung by them. A Heavenly Conversation is the way of Contentment.

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The Seventh *Direction.*

A ſeventh rule is, *Do not promiſe to your ſelves too much before hand, do not make account of too great things*: It is good for us to take hold very, low and not think to pitch too high; do not ſoar too high in your thoughts beforehand, to thing, O, if I had this and this, and imagine great matters to your ſelves, but be as good *Jacob*, you know he was a man that lived a very contented life in a mean condition, (ſaith he) *Lord, if I may but have cloaths to put on, and meat to eat*; he look'd no higer, he was content with that: ſo if we would not pitch our thoughts high, and think that we might have what others have, ſo much, and ſo much, when we meet with diſappointments, we would not be ſo much troubled: and ſo S. *Paul*, *If we have but meat and drink and clothing, let us be therewith content*; he did not ſoar too high aloft, thoſe that look at high things in the world; they meet with diſappointments, and ſo they come to be diſcontent; be as high as you will in ſpiritual meditations, God gives liberty there to any of you to be as high as you will, above Angles; but for your outward eſtate, God would not have you aim at high things, *Seekeſt thou great things* (ſaith the Lord to *Baruch*) *ſeek them not, you ſhall have your life for a prey.* In theſe times eſpecially, it were a very great evil for any to aim at great things, *Seek them not*, be willing to take hold low, and to creep low, and if God doth raiſe thee, thou ſhalt have cauſe to bleſs him, but if thou ſhouldeſt not be raiſed, there would not be much trouble: one that creeps low, cannot fall far, but it is thoſe that are on high whoſe fall doth bruiſe them moſt; that is a good rule, Promiſe not your ſelves great matters, neither aim at any great things in the World.

The Eighth *Direction.*

Labour to get your hearts mortified to the world, dead to the world: We muſt not content our ſelves that we have gotten ſome reaſoning above the vanity of the creature, and ſuch kind of things as theſe are, but we muſt exerciſe mortification, and be crucified to the world, ſaith S. *Paul*, *I die daily*, we would die daily to the

the World; *We are baptized into the Death of Christ*, that is to signifie that we have taken such a profession as to profess to be even as dead Men to the world; now there are no crosses that fall out in the world that doth trouble those that are dead, if our hearts were dead to the world, we should not be much troubled with the changes of the world, nor the tossings about of worldly things. As it is very observable in those Souldiers that come to break the Bones of Christ, they brake the legs of one that was crucified with him, and of the other, but when they came to Christ, they found he was dead, and so they did not break his Legs, there was a providence in it, to fulfil a Prophesie, but because they found he was dead, they did not break his bones. Let afflictions and trouble find thee with a mortified heart to the world, and they will not break thy Bones; the Bones of those that are broken by crosses and afflictions, are those that are alive to the world, that are not dead to the world; but one that ha. h a a mortified heart, and dead to the world, no afflictions or troubles will break the bones of such a one, that is, they will not be very grievous or painful to such a one as is mortified to the world: This I fear is a mystery and riddle to many, for one to be dead to the world, to be mortified to the world. Now it is not my work to open to you what Mortification is, or death to the world is, but onely thus; To have our hearts so taken off from the things of the world, as to use them as if one used them not, not to make account that our lives, our comforts, our happiness doth consist in these things, they are things that are of another nature that our happiness doth consist in, and we may be happy without these, this is a kind of deadness to the world.

The Ninth *Direction.*

Let not Men and Women pore too much upon their afflictions, that is, busie their thoughts too much to look down into their afflictions; you shall have many people, that all their thoughts are taken up about what their crosses and afflictions are, they are altogether thinking and speaking of them, it is just with them as with a child that hath a sore about him, his finger is

always upon the ſore; and ſo men and women their thought are always upon their afflictions, when they awake in the night their thoughts are upon their afflictions, and when they converſe with others (nay it may be when they are praying to God) they are thinking of their afflictions. Oh! no marvel though you live a diſcontented Life, if your thoughts be always poring upon ſuch things, you ſhould rather labor to have your thoughts upon thoſe things that may comfort you, You ſhall have many that if you propound any rule to them to do them good, they take it well while they are with you, and thank you for it, but when they are gone they ſoon forget it. It is very obſervable of *Jacob*, that when his Wife died in child-birth, his Wife called the child *Ben-oni*, that is, a Son of ſorrows; now *Jacob* he thought with himſelf, if I ſhould call this child *Ben-oni*, every time that I name him, it will put me in mind of the death of my dear Wife, and of that affliction, & that will be a continued affliction to me, therefore I will not have my child to have that name; and ſo the text ſaith, that *Jacob* called his name *Benjamin*, and that was, the Son of my right hand: now this is to ſhew us thus much, that when afflictions befal us, we ſhould not give way to have our thoughts continually upon them, but rather upon thoſe things that may ſtir up our thankfulneſs to God for mercies. It is the Similitude of S. *Baſil* a learned man, ſaith he, It is in this caſe as it is with men and women that have ſore eyes, now it is not fit for thoſe to be always looking upon the fire, or upon the Beams of the Sun; no (ſaith he) one that hath ſore eyes muſt get things that are ſutable to him, and ſuch objects that are fit for one that hath weak eyes, therefore they will get green colours, as that being a more eaſie colour and better for weak eyes, & they will hang a green Sarſnet before their eyes, becauſe it is more ſutable to them: So weak ſpirits it is the very ſame, a man or Woman that hath a weak Spirit, they muſt not be looking upon the fire of their afflictions, upon thoſe things that deject, that caſt them down, but they are to be looking rather upon that which may be ſutable for the healing and helping of them, they ſhould be conſidering of thoſe things rather than the other. It will be of very great uſe and benefit to you if you do lay it to heart, not to be poring always upon affliction but upon mercies.

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The Tenth *Direction.*

I beseech you observe this, though you should forget many others. *Make a good interpretation of Gods ways toward you,* if there can be any good interpretation made of God's ways towards you, make it. You think it much if you have a friend that should always make bad interpretations of your ways towards him, you will take that ill: if you should converse with people that you cannot speak a word in their hearing, but they are ready to make an ill interpretation of it, and take it in an ill sense, you would think their company to be very tedious to you It is very tedious to the Spirit of God when we make such ill interpretations of his ways towards us. If God deal with us otherwise than we would have him, if there can be any sense worse than other made of it, we will be sure to make it; as thus: When an affliction doth befall you, there may be many good senses made of Gods works towards you, you should think thus, It may be God intends only to try me by this, it may be God saw my heart too much set upon the Creature, and so intend to shew me what there is in my heart, it may be that God saw that if my estate did continue I should fall into sin, that the better my estate were, the worse my soul would be, it may be God intended only to exercise some Grace, it may be God intends to prepare me for some great work which he hath for me. Thus you should reason.

But we on the contrary make bad interpretations of God's thus dealing with us, and say; God doth not mean this, surely the Lord means by this, to manifest his wrath and displeasure against me, and this is but a furtherance of further evills that he intends towards me: Just as they did in the Wilderness, *God hath brought us hither to slay us.* This is the worst interpretation that possibly you can make of God's ways: Oh! Why will you make these worst interpretations when there may be better? in 1 *Cor.* 1. 3, 5. When the Scripture spakes of love, saith the text, *Love thinketh no evil.* Love is of that nature that if there may be ten interpretations made of a thing, if nine of them be naught, and one good, Love will take that which is good

and leave the other nine; and ſo though there might be ten interpretations preſented to thee concerning Gods ways towards thee, and if but one be good, and nine naught thou ſhouldeſt take one that is good, and leave the other nine. I beſeech you conſider, God doth not deal by you as you deal with him, ſhould God make the worſt interpretation of all your ways towards him, as you do of his towards you, it would be very ill with you; God is pleaſed to manifeſt his love thus to us, to make the beſt interpretations of what we do, and therefore it is, that God doth put a ſenſe upon the actions of his people that one would think could hardly be; as thus, God is pleaſed to call thoſe perfect that have but any uprightneſs of heart in them, he accounteth them perfect, *Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect*; uprightneſs in Gods ſenſe is perfection. Now alas, when we look into our own Hearts, we can ſcarce ſee any good at all there and yet God is pleaſed to make ſuch an interpretation as to ſay; it is perfect: When we look into our own hearts, we can ſee nothing but uncleanneſs; God, he calls you his Saints, he calls the meaneſt Chriſtian that hath the leaſt grace under the greateſt corruption, his Saint; you ſay, we cannot be Saints, here, but yet in Gods eſteem we are Saints: You know the uſual Title the Holy Ghoſt gives (in ſeveral of the Epiſtles) to thoſe that had any Grace, any Uprightneſs, is, *To the Saints* in ſuch a place; you ſee what an interpretation God puts upon them, they are Saints to him, and ſo I might name in divers other particulars, God makes the beſt interpretation of things; if there be abundance of evil and a little good, God rather paſſes by the evil, and takes notice of the good: That ſometimes I have made uſe of, which is a very obſervable place in *Peter* concerning *Sarah*; *Sarah* had a ſpeech to her Husband in *Gen* 18. 12. ſhe called her husband Lord, but there was but that one good word in an ill ſpeech, it was an unbelieving ſpeech, but yet when the Apoſtle mentions that ſpeech in 1. *Pet.* 3. 6. the holy Ghoſt leaves all the ill, and commends her for calling her husband Lord, for putting a reverent Title upon her Husband; thus how gratiouſly doth God deal with us? If there be but one good word among a great many ill, what an interpretation God makes! ſo ſhould we do, if there be but any good interpretation that we can make

make of a thing, we ſhould rather make uſe of the good one than of the ill; O my Brethren, (I would I could now ſpeak only to ſuch as are godly) retain good thoughts of God, take heed of judging God to be a hard Maſter, make good interpretations of his ways, and that is a means to help you to contentment in all your courſes.

The Eleventh *Direction.*

Do not ſo much regard the fancies of other Men, as what indeed you feel your ſelves; For the reaſon of our diſcontentment many times is rather from the fancies of other Men, than from what we find we want our ſelves, we think poverty to be ſuch a great evil, why? Becauſe it is ſo eſteemed by others more than what people feel in it themſelves, except they be in extremity of poverty: I'll give you an evident demonſtration that almoſt all the diſcontent in the world is rather from the fancies of others than from the evil that is upon themſelves. You that think your eſtates to be low, and you are thereupon diſcontent, and it is a grievous affliction to you, but if all men in the World were poorer than you, then your would not be diſcontent, then you would rejoyce in your eſtates though you had not a peny more then you have: As take a Man that can get but his twelve pence a day, and you will ſay this were but a poor thing to maintain a Family? But ſuppoſe there were no man in the world that had more then this, yea that all other Men but your ſeves had ſomewhat leſs wages then you, then you would think your condition pretty good: yet you ſhould have no more then you have now; therefore it appears by this, that it is rather from the fancies of other Men than what you feel that makes you think your condition to be ſo grievous; for if all the men in the world look'd upon you as happy, more happy than themſelves, then you would be contented; O, let not your happineſs depend upon the fancies of other men. It is a ſpeech of *Chryſoſtom* I remember in this very caſe, Let us not make the people in this caſe to be our Lords, as we muſt not make men to be the Lords of our faith, ſo not the Lords of our comforts; that is, that our comfort ſhould depend more upon their imaginations,

ginations, than upon what we feel in our selves. It may be others think you to be in an afflicted condition, yea, but I thank God, for my self I do not so apprehend it, were it not for the disgrace, disesteem and slighting of other men, my condition would not be so bad to me as now it is; this is that which makes my condition afflictive.

The Twelfth *Direction.*

Be not inordinately taken up with the comforts of this World when you have them. When you have them, do not take too much content in them: that is a certain rule, that look how inordinate any man or woman is in sorrow when a comfort is taken from them, so much immoderate were they in the rejoycing in the comfort when they had it: as now for instance, God takes away a child, and you are inordinately sorrowful beyound what God allows in a natural or Christian way; now, though I never knew before how your hearts was towards the child, yet when I see this (though you be a meer stranger to me) I may without breach or charity conclude, thot your heart was immoderately set upon your child or husband, or upon any other comfort that I see you griveing for; when God hath taken it away, if you hear ill tidings about your estates, and your hearts are dejected immoderately, and you are in a discontented way becaus of such and such a cross, certainly your hearts were immoderately set upon the world, and so likewise for your credit, if you hear others report this or that ill of you, and your hearts are dejected because you think you suffer in your name, your hearts were inordinately set upon your name and credit, now therefore the way for you not to be immoderate in your sorrows for afflictions, it is, not to be immoderate in your love and delights when you have prosperity. And these are the principal Directions for our help that we may live quiet, and contented lives.

My brethren, to conclude all for this point, if I could tell you that I knew how to shew you a way never to be in want of any thing, I make no question but then we should have much flocking to such a Sermon, when a Man should undertake to manifest

niſeſt to people that they ſhould never be in want any more, but I have been now preaching unto you that that comes to as much that which countervails this, that which is in effect all one. Is it not almoſt all one, never to be in want, or never to be without Contentment? that man or woman that is never without a contented ſpirit, truly, can never be ſaid to want much; O! the Word holds forth a way full of comfort and peace to the people of God even in this World, you may live happy lives in the midſt of all the ſtorms and tempeſts in the World, there is an Ark that you may come into, and no men in the world may live ſuch comfortable, cheerful, and contented lives as the Saints of God: O, that we had learned this Leſſon: I have been many Sermons about this Leſſon of Contentment, but I am afraid that you will be longer in learning of it, than I have been preaching of it; it is a harder thing to learn it than it is to ſpeak or preach it. (I remember) I have read of one man reading of that place in the 32. *Pſ. I will take heed that I offend not with my tongue*: ſaith he, I have been this 38 years a learning this Leſſon, and have not learned it throughly. The truth is, there are many (I am afraid) that have been profeſſors near eight and thirty years, have hardly learn'd this Leſſon; it were a good leſſon for young Profeſſors to begin to learn this betimes, But now, this leſſon of Chriſtian Contentment, it is as hard, and perhaps you may be many years in learning it: I am afraid there be ſome Chriſtians that have not yet learned, *Not to offend groſly with their Tongues*: The Scripture ſaith, *all a mans Religion is vain, if he cannot bridle his Tongue*, therefore, thoſe that make any profeſſion of Godlineſs, one would think they ſhould quickly learn this Leſſon, ſuch a Leſſon that except learned, it makes all their Religion vain: But for this Leſſon, of Chriſtian Contentment, it may take up more time to learn, and there is many that are learning it all their days of their lives, and yet are not Proficient; but God forbid that it ſhould be ſaid of any of us concerning this Leſſon, as the Apoſtle ſaith of Widows in *Timothy*, *That they were ever learning, and never came to the knowledge of the Truth.* Oh, let us not be ever learning this leſſon of Contentment, and yet never come to have skill in it. You would think it much if you had uſed the Sea

twenty

twenty years, & yet to have attained to no skill in your art of Navigation, you will say I have used the Sea 20 or 30 years, and I hope I may know by this time what belongs to Sea; Oh, that you would but say so in respect of the Art of Christianity! When there is any thing that is spoken concerning the duty of a Christian, O, that Christians could but say, I have been a Christian thus long, and I hope I am not to seek in such a thing that is so necessary for a Christian; here is a necessary lesson for a Christian, that S. *Paul* said: *He had learned in all estates there, with to be content*. Oh! be not content with your selves tell you have learned this lesson of Christian Contentment, gotten some better skill in it than heretofore.

Now there is in the text another Lesson which is a hard Lesson, *I have learned to abound*, that doth not so nearly concern us at this time, because the times are afflictive times, and there is now (more than ordinary) an uncertainty in all things in the World, in such times as these are, there are few that have such an abundance, that they need to be much taught in that Lesson.

FINIS.